

KASHMIR TODAY

" Thru' Many Eyes "

by

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C O N T E N T S

	Page.
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter I	
BACKGROUND	6
Chapter II	
EVENTS	22
Chapter III	
ACCOUNTS OF HAPPENINGS	32
Chapter IV	
IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS' ACCOUNT OF REPRESSION	39
Chapter V	
"HELP KASHMIR"	47
Chapter VI	
PRESS COMMENTS	48
Chapter VII	
STATES PEOPLES' CONFERENCE	71
Chapter VIII	
PANDIT NERHU'S ARREST	87
Chapter IX	
KASHMIR GOVERNMENT CRITICISED	96
Chapter X	
NEHRU-AZAD-KASHMIR RULER CORRESPONDENCE	117
Chapter XI	
PANDIT NEHRU'S ACCOUNT	124
POSTSCRIPT	128
APPENDIX	129



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
President, All-India States Peoples' Conference

INTRODUCTION

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is the biggest of the Indian States, covering 84,471 square miles. Its revenue exceeds 3½ crores of rupees, and it ranks as the third richest state in India.

Kashmir is not merely "a geographical expression" in the North-west of the vast sub-continent of India, famed for its beauty and natural wealth, but it is a land strategically situated, the meeting point of India, China, Russia and as such has an international significance.

It was about 100 years ago, that this unfortunate land was transferred to one of the ancestors of the present ruler by the treaty of Amritsar in lieu of 75 lacs of Sikh Currency by the East India Company.

The immensity of the wrong done by this sale-deed can only be judged by looking into the actual living conditions of the people of Kashmir. Ninety-six out of every 100 persons draw sustenance from the land, and live in far-flung and isolated villages oppressed by want and harried by disease. Their average yearly income barely reaches eleven rupees per head, i.e. about 15 annas per month per head.

"The peasants are sunk in unimaginable poverty. Their mud huts contain hardly a trace of visible property, save a few pots and water jars. When I put my questions in a typical village, every household was in debt, and the usual rate of interest was 48 per cent. If a peasant owns his holding, it is rarely big enough to feed his family throughout the year, and he makes up the deficiency by trekking as a seasonal labourer across the mountains to the Punjab. He has no land, he works as a sharecropper and pays to the owner by way of rent, one-half of all his produce," said Mr. Brailsford in his statement on Kashmir.

He further said: "His wooden plough dates from the dark ages and his cattle, if he has any, are of such miserable breeds that they are hardly worth the trouble of milking. Worse than all this, much of the land is held under feudal tenure by great landlords, known as Jagirdars, who draw their tribute from the cultivators, as a reward for some service rendered to the Maharaja or his ancestors. Most of them are absentees and the worst of them are above the law. The peasants, taxed to the limit of their endurance and subject to an administration that is corrupt from top to bottom, are voteless, unorganised and helpless in their ignorance. In the village where I made my enquiries, not a single child went to the school. Their undernourishment was obvious at a glance, and the women complained of the total lack of medical care."

Kashmir is hot news these days. Various reports are before the Public. While presenting the following I claim to offer an unretouched picture of the background, the events, the atrocities as witnessed and reported by independent observers and press correspondents. Certain admissions of the Kashmir State authorities complete the picture.

I have for the reader included in the appendix various official documents and resolutions passed from time to time which would provide the basis of the present struggle.

I have sufficed by quoting only what has appeared in the press. The actual happenings are even more horrible. What is happening today is still worse,—arrests, mass meetings, punitive police, lathi charges, mass Searches, complete terrorisation are in full swing.

In the absence of an impartial tribunal which would reveal the situation in its true perspective, I leave to the public the ultimate tribunal—to judge for themselves.

All that we claim is human rights, i.e., the right to live free from want and misery, from hyranny and oppression, from squalor and disease.

Before I close I feel it essential to remove an impression that is being created by interested parties. While the Kashmiris are suffering the worst form of repression, organised lawlessness and disregard of human considerations, the Kashmir Government and their clique create a bogey of "Russian Influence" in Kashmir politics. Needless to say, that currency is being given to this figment of their imagination to side-track the main issues, cover their wrongs and to provide a handle for invoking the help of the Political Department on a false pretext.

Pandit Nehru in a statement said: "I find that all manner of stories are prevalent of communist action in Kashmir and the example of Azerbaijan is cited. A few Communists have undoubtedly worked in Kashmir, but it is absurd to think that the movement is due to them. It is still more absurd to bring in Azerbaijan."

I would most emphatically repudiate such a charge and would assert that we have nothing to do with any foreign power of any complexion and we owe no allegiance to any of them. We shall tolerate no interference from any outside power, including Russia and situated as we are, we will be the first to defend India's integrity, unity and honour if it is molested in any way.

I would only conclude with the remarks of our beloved leader Sher-i-Kashmir Shiekh Mohd. Abdulla who has characterised our fight in the following words:

"The fight is no new one for us; it has got its own heritage of the past, and it has its own vision of the future... It is for the poor against those who exploit them; for the toiling people of our beautiful homeland against the heartless ranks of the socially privileged."

"Between the snow-adorned barrier ranges of the Himalayas, and the earth-coloured and sun-scorched plains of the Punjab, live our people, forty lacs of them, in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and the Frontier Regions, in the Poonch and the Chinani Ilaqas. Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Kashmiri Pandits, Jains and Harijans inhabit the summer and winter capital

of Srinagar and Jammu, thirty-nine towns and nearly nine thousand villages.

"Ninety-six out of every hundred of our people draw sustenance from the land, and live in far-flung and isolated villages, oppressed by want and harried by disease. Their average yearly income barely reaches Rs. 11 per head.

"Therefore it has always been our goal to fight the immemorial poverty of peasant and the artisan and the unmitigated helplessness of the worker.

"Throughout the lean centuries of history, the poor and exploited sons of Kashmir have been the palanquin bearers of Hindu monarchs and Buddhist rulers and Moghul emperors."

"The peasant sons of the valley and the mountains have scratched only nine inches of top soil and eked out a bare existence. Now the time has come when they must dig deep into the bowels of the earth, and yoke the technique of modern science to the task of getting for themselves a bigger and better morsel of daily bread.

"Whereas great stress has been laid on the old Treaties between the British power and the states and attempts have been made to use these Treaties to perpetuate autocracy and the semi-feudal order which has so long prevailed in the States and to obstruct the progress of the people, it is necessary to point out the real character of these Treaties, the manner and circumstances under which they were made, the person who made them, and the interpretations placed on them in later years. Out of 562 states in India only forty have such treaties, and these were usually made after a conflict between the officers or agents of the East India Company and persons who had no status of independence, but who had come to exercise authority over part of the country after the collapse of the central authority in India, which resulted from the fall of the Moghal Empire. The treaties were made without any reference to or regard for the people and applied to the then existing circumstances. Gradually, as these circumstances changed they ceased to have

any importance, and many of them were ignored or even completely abrogated long ago by the practice of the Political Department of the Government of India which varied and developed with the changing policy of the Paramount Power. In any event, the Treaties made over a century ago cannot be considered binding on the people of the States at a time when conditions have entirely changed. The Treaties are now used by the Paramount Power to intervene in the struggle for freedom in the States in favour of the Rulers, and the obligation of this power to protect the people from misrule and oppression is ignored."

BAKSHI GULAM MOHD.

Acting President,

All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

July 4, 1946.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Modern political history of Jammu and Kashmir State during last 15 years as viewed by the special correspondent of the "Statesman" on June 11, 1946.

The modern political history of Jammu and Kashmir is synonymous with the life-story of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. From 1931 onwards, he, more than any one else, reflects the hopes and aspirations of the people of the State.

He is the hero, as well as the author, of the three-act drama which has been enacted on the political stage of the State over a period of 15 years. In the first act he led a communal movement; in the second he played the role of a nationalist, and now he appears to feature as a socialist. The politics of Kashmir, as a result of his dynamic example, have also passed through these three stages.

Son of a shawl merchant, Sheikh Abdullah was born in 1905, not very far from Srinagar. His parents died when he was still a boy. He was brought up by his elder brothers. Financially, they still look after him and his family.

When he passed out of Aligarh University with an M.Sc. degree in 1930, he was among the very few Muslims who had achieved this academic distinction.

Six feet four inches, Sheikh Abdullah is the tallest Kashmiri I have met. He is strongly built and his imposing figure towers over his companions. A man of great physical endurance, he is a likable companion. English is not his strong point. Therefore, casual acquaintances are likely to under-estimate his abilities.

His political strength is based on personal integrity and the trust he inspires among his followers. He never uses political influence for personal ends. He associates himself with the life of the lowest. So great is the admiration of his followers in the Kashmir Valley, that I have seen people kiss his footprints.

The first time Sheikh Abdullah appeared on the public stage was in September, 1930, when he, together with a few young colleagues sent a representation to the Government commenting on the recruitment of Muslims in the State services. Till then he was absolutely unknown except as a frequent visitor to a local reading room. He had just returned from college and, naturally his first problem was a job. It was also his first disappointment.

Psychologists would probably trace back the genesis of the "Quit Kashmir" slogan to this early frustration. Circumstances have only fed the growth of the idea, which took root at the time. In this incident was also wrapped up a number of ideas concerning the Kashmir situation. No doubt these must have fired the Sheikh's youthful imagination.

One of the most pronounced policies of the present regime, for instance, is the exclusion of non-Dogras from the Army. No Kashmiri Hindu or Muslim can join it. This handicap also applies to the people of Ladakh and other frontier districts. Yet, this was not so in the time of the first two Maharajas of the Dogra dynasty, when many Kashmiris took part in expeditions to frontier areas. The increasing reliance of the dynasty on its Dogra kinsmen is usually explained by the growing political awakening of Kashmiris.

The Dogras—Hindu or Muslim—are a comparatively satisfied community. They are not advanced in education. However, they enjoy a number of privileges and derive intense satisfaction from their kinship with the ruling tribe. The people of Kashmir, on the other hand, whom the Dogras conquered immediately after the famous Treaty of Amritsar, are junior partners in the political-set-up of the State. Explaining their exclusion from the

State Army, a Kashmiri Pandit writes: "There is no place in the Army for Kashmiris or the people of frontier districts because they belong to a subject race and cannot be trusted."

Similar thoughts must have entered Sheikh Abdullah's mind as he emerged on September 11, 1930, from a meeting with the Council of Ministers, who told him that no direct appointment of Muslims could be made to the higher ranks of Government service as the rules had recently been altered. Civil administration posts in the higher category were practically reserved for Punjabis during the reign of Maharaja Partab Singh and for Rajputs in the beginning of the present Maharaja's rule.

An equitable share in Government service, therefore, became the main plank of the young Muslims of Kashmir. They wished to organise themselves to publicise their demand. However, there was no freedom of association at the time. Nor was there any freedom of speech. There was, however, one outlet—the Press in British India. It was employed to ventilate their grievances, which were not unusually coupled with attacks on the Hindu Raj and the Hindu community.

Abdullah's party, at that time was known as the Reading Room Party due to the interest they took in a small local library. In Kashmir, as elsewhere, the Muslim masses are, educationally backward, but, more than in any other place, they are devoted to the local Mullahs. The biggest of these are the two Mir Waizes of Srinagar—Maulana Usuf Shah, of Jumma Mosque, and Mir Waiz Hamadani, of Khanqoh-i-Mualia. They are rivals in profession.

Sheikh Abdullah and his young colleagues realised early in their political career that at the beginning, at any rate, they could achieve little without the co-operation of the Mullahs, as a single edict from them would have nipped the young movement in the bud. They were lucky in winning their support and the use of the mosques to serve as their political meeting places.

Thus, preparations were gradually completed for a general upheaval. The Sheikh and his party waited for an opportunity. It came quickly.

A number of incidents occurred in different parts of the State which lent themselves to the slogan "Islam in danger." They were small incidents in themselves, but, in the context of the excited times, they served as gunpowder.

What followed now belongs to history. Here it would suffice to say that the movement led to rioting, which was widespread and looked like a general eruption, guided by the latent power of the masses. Firing had to be resorted to at a number of places. Muslim opinion seemed to have crystallised on the point that the Government and Hindus were inseparable. Superficially, one meant the other. In some places Muslim crowds revenged themselves of Hindus. On the night of July 13, which is remembered in Kashmir as the turning point in its history, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was arrested and put in Hari Parbat Fort, called the "Bastille of Kashmir."

Throughout 1931 conditions remained abnormal. People seemed to rise again and again at different places. Civil authority was unable to cope with the situation. Ordinary law no longer seemed to exist. Martial law therefore had to be proclaimed. Recourse was taken to flogging. Punitive taxes were imposed and every known measure was adopted to restore respect for the law.

In Jammu province the services of British troops were requisitioned, particularly in the district of Mirpur, which for a time was entirely cut off from Jammu. The situation came under control only towards the end of February, 1932.

A definite landmark in the story is the appointment of a commission under the chairmanship of Mr. B. J. Glancy, of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, to enquire into and report on the various complaints of a religious or general nature which may be laid before it. Among its non-official members were two Hindus and two Muslims.

This report is of great importance, as it brought to light that genuine grievances existed, which needed redress. The main recommendations of the Commission were readily accepted by His Highness. Among them was the return of some Muslim religious buildings to the community, the desirability of extending primary education, an increase in the number of Muslim teachers and, appointment of special officers to supervise Muslim education. On the crucial question of distribution of Government posts, it recommended that the "minimum qualifications should not be pitched unnecessarily high." It granted proprietary rights in all respects to all lands of which ownership was retained by the State while right of occupancy was enjoyed by a private person. It also abrogated the grazing tax and the system of forced labour.

As a result of Mr. Glancy's recommendations, a Legislative Assembly was formed, consisting of 75 members of whom 33 were elected. The constitution, permitted questions, resolutions, introduction of Bills and discussion on the State budget. The Army and His Highness' privy purse were among the "reserved subjects."

Not the least important among Mr. Glancy's recommendations was the grant of freedom to the Press on lines similar to those which existed in British India. Truly Mr. Glancy's Report forms the Magna Carta of the State and is looked upon as such by the people. It provided a firm foundation on which to build the future.

Taking advantage of this newly-found freedom Muslims formed the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in the summer of 1932. Its main object was to gather the harvest of communal gains promised in the Glancy Report. It is interesting to note that while the Muslim masses chiefly suffered in the struggle of 1931-32, their leaders' only aim was consolidation of the communal position in Government service. Their benefits did not accrue to the poor.

The Muslim Conference remained in existence till June, 1938. It held six annual sessions, four of which were presided over by Sheikh Abdullah. A review of the

presidential addresses at the conference shows the importance it attached to the detailed examination of State services and the Muslim share in them, thus bringing out that either the Glancy Commission's report was not being carried out or was being carried out too tardily. The problems of peasants and artisans, who formed the bulk of the population, remained untouched.

This neglect had its natural result. The agitation of 1934, started to secure the full and immediate implementation of the Glancy Commission's report so far as it related to the Muslim proportion in Government service, met with poor response from the people. They remained practically unmoved and the Government had little difficulty in suppressing it, in two weeks.

The failure of this movement may be said to have paved the way to the second act of the political drama—conversion of the Muslim Conference to the National Conference.

The rank and file of the Muslim Conference began to realise that they must carry with them the goodwill of the minorities in political matters. Fundamentally their interests were similar. Even in his first presidential address. Sheikh Abdullah had accepted this fact. He said: "Our country cannot progress until we learn to live amicably with one another. That is possible only when we respect our mutual rights." There lay the seed of nationalism which was to fructify in 1938.

Secondly, when, as a result of the Glancy Commission's recommendations, people began to have Muslim officers, it soon dawned upon them that their woes were not lessened. It was the system which needed a change, not its personnel. Muslim leaders who had prescribed this ineffective remedy were bewildered when at places Muslims asked for reappointment of experienced Hindu officers in place of some newly-appointed Muslims.

Thirdly, the Legislative Assembly which started functioning in 1934 soon disappointed the Muslim Conference. Its official, nominated and elected blocs seldom agreed on any issue. Its powers were limited, which only whetted

the political appetite of elected members. They felt the need of responsible Government even more keenly. This could hardly be achieved without the co-operation of at least the advanced section of the minorities.

I was in Srinagar in the summers of 1937 and 1938 and felt for myself the rapidly-changing political atmosphere. A curious fact was that members of minorities frequently urged the leaders of the Muslim Conference to open its doors to them. Among them was Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, whose mastery of the political and economic trends of the State is unrivalled. He was a member of the Glancy Commission and ran a weekly newspaper jointly with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. His influence over the Muslim leader at the time was great. He finally convinced the Sheikh of the necessity of "nationalising" the Conference.

The coming event cast its shadow in the presidential address to the sixth annual session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, at which Sheikh Abdullah said: "The main problem now before us is to organise joint action and a united front against the forces that stand in our way in the achievement of our goal. This will require the rechristening of our organisation as a non-communal political body...."

The first stage on the road to nationalism was reached on June 28, 1938, when the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference met at Srinagar and, after a heated discussion lasting 52 hours, passed a resolution recommending to the General Council that at the forthcoming annual session of the Conference the name and constitution of the organisation be altered in order to allow all people to become its members, "irrespective of their caste, creed or religion."

The National Conference was created in the early hours of June 11, 1939, when a special session of the Muslim Conference, held at Srinagar, accepted the recommendation of the Working Committee. The Muslim Conference was no more, its place was taken by the All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

The new Working Committee included a Sikh and a number of prominent Hindus of the State. The change gave fresh impetus to the movement. The occasion was unique. Never had any other communal organisation in India achieved this amazing conversion. Large-heartedness seemed to have combined with far-sightedness to bring about this consummation.

The first session of the National Conference was held in October, 1939. It passed a resolution embodying what was popularly termed the "National Demand." It asked for responsible Government, "subject to the general control and residuary powers of His Highness."

The Ministry was to be responsible to the Jammu and Kashmir Legislature enjoying powers to control the expenditure of all revenues except on the military services, subjects classed as political and foreign and payments of debts and liabilities contracted and incurred by His Highness-in-Council. It envisaged a Legislature consisting entirely of members elected by constituencies founded on the system of adult franchise. Election to the Legislature, it said, should be made on the basis of joint electorates, seats being reserved for the minorities. The resolution was in the nature of the minimum demand of the Conference.

That resolution continued to represent the official view of the Conference during the years of war. They were also years of co-operation with the Government, for, says Sheikh Abdullah, "as patriots our task was to save our people from hunger at home and add our strength to the anti-Fascist struggle of the people of India and the world." Towards this end the Conference organised its entire strength. It took a share in the distribution of foodstuffs and fuel through people's food committees.

The year 1944 brings us to the last stage of the drama—conversion of the Conference to the full-fledged socialism embodied in its official pamphlet "New Kashmir." It represents Sheikh Abdullah's conception of a model State in which democratic and responsible Government is only

a means to an end—the amelioration of the people “through freedom from all forms of economic exploitation.”

Certain aspects of Soviet Russia appeal profoundly to the Sheikh, for he says: “In our times, Soviet Russia has demonstrated before our eyes, not merely theoretically but in her actual day-to-day life and development that real freedom takes birth only from economic emancipation. The inspiring picture of the regeneration of all the different nationalities and peoples of the USSR and their welding together into a mighty Russian State, which has thrown back its barbarous invaders with deathless heroism, is an unanswerable argument for the building of democracy on the corner-stone of economic equality.”

“New Kashmir” consists of two parts—political, which provides a new constitution, and economic, which lays down a plan for “an all-sided advance along all avenues of human activity regulated in a democratic manner on a country-wide scale.” The plan covers agriculture, industry, transport, distribution, utility services and currency and finance.

The “Quit Kashmir” slogan is a logical corollary of “New Kashmir”. Now the demand of the National Conference is not merely the establishment of a system of responsible government “but their right to absolute freedom from the autocratic rule of the Dogra House.” It seeks to revoke the Treaty of Amritsar of 1846, by which the British transferred the sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh, a vassal of the Sikh Kingdom in lieu of Rs. 50,00,000.

“No sale deed,” asserts the National Conference memorandum to the Cabinet Mission, “however sacrosanct, can condemn more than four million men and women to the servitude of an autocrat when the will to live under his rule is no longer there. We, the people of Kashmir, are determined to mould our own destiny and we appeal to the members of the Cabinet Mission to recognise the justice and strength of our cause.”

Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah's statement on the ministerial crisis in the Kashmir State on April 22, 1946

Recently the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Working Committee reviewed the farcical character of the diarchic experiment and decided to withdraw its representative from the Council of Ministers. Accordingly, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg resigned from the Ministership, and returned to the opposition benches.

The Prime Minister, backed by his clique of irresponsible bureaucrats, resorted to the base tactics of attempting to bribe and disrupt the ranks of the National Conference itself. In so doing they had resorted to Machiavellian ways, and Mian Ahmad Yar, the Leader of the had taken place by direct command of the Maharaja, and Assembly Party has fallen prey to them. His appointment therefore his representative capacity just does not exist. Thus the Maharaja has not only put an axe on the elective system of appointing popular ministers, on the lines of his diarchic experiment, but has become a party to the conspiracy against the popular Movement in the Kashmir.

Such an attack on the rights of the people, and the unity of their representative organisation, has come at a time when the minds of the people of Kashmir are already exploring the new perspective opened up by the attempts at constitution-making of the Cabinet Mission. The question of the treaty rights of the Princes has become a moot point between the peoples of the State, the Princely Order, and the Paramount Power. For us in Kashmir, the re-examination of this relationship is a vital matter, because a hundred years ago, in 1846, the land and people of Kashmir were sold away to the servitude of the Dogra House by the British for 75 lacs of rupees. The then Governor of Kashmir resisted the transfer but was finally reduced to subjection with the aid of British. Thus the sale deed of 1846, misnamed the Treaty of Amritsar, had sealed the fate of the masses of Kashmir.

For the last fifteen years since the inception of our freedom movement in 1931, we have attempted to give a fair trial to all reforms believing that readjustment of

human relationships will take place with the extension of the democratic framework to all fields of our national life. Thus we believed that we could come in line with the rest of the world in the era of the Atlantic Charter and the revision of basic relationships with the dawning of the independence of nations.

But once again the last act of His Highness has exposed the continuance of the "feudal master governing the serfs" mentality. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to last. The resurgent spirit of the people challenges it in the name of human dignity.

No sale deed, however sacrosanct, can condemn more than four million men and women to the servitude of an autocrat when the will to live under this rule is no longer there. The people of Kashmir are determined to mould their own destiny, and we appeal to the Members of the Cabinet Mission to recognise the justice and strength of our cause.

Speech delivered by Sheikh Abdullah before his recent arrest as reported by the "Tribune" on May 26, 1946.

"The tyranny of the Dorgas has lacerated our souls. The Kashmiris are the most handsome people, yet the most wretched looking. It is time for action. To end your poverty, you must fight slavery and enter the field of Jihad as soldiers. The fight slogan of our struggle is not only for our State but for the whole of India. India is fighting against Imperialism. The slogan was given on the banks of River Ravi....Then came the slogan of 'Quit India,' The British gained hold of India by the force of arms and by treachery.

"The rulers of the Indian States who possess one-fourth of India, have always played traitors to the cause of Indian freedom. The demand that the Princely Orders should quit is a logical extension of the policy of "Quit India". When the Indian freedom movement demands the complete withdrawal of British power, logically enough the stooges of British Imperialism also should go and restore sovereignty to its real owners—the people. When we raise the slogan of 'Quit Kashmir', we naturally

visualise that the Princes and Nawabs should quit all the States. I am sure this demand applies similarly to a State like Hyderabad where the people will, I am sure, raise their voice, "Quit Hyderabad".

"Those Hindus who think along with Mr. R. C. Kak that the Dogra rule should remain should never forget that we are treated in Kashmir as a bought-up race without distinction of religion.

"Why are we banned entry to the army? Why is it that every day now and then we hear that a Jagir here and a Jagir there has been granted to the satellites of the Dogra dynasty only in Kashmir? Why is not a Kashmiri given Jagir or land in the land of the Dogras?

"Handcuffs jingle. They do not make us afraid. God will give us faith in victory. The voice of truth will prevail. Prophets have spoken for the truth, which has always triumphed finally.

"Sovereignty is not the birthright of a ruler. Every man, woman and child will shout, 'Quit Kashmir'. The Kashmiri nation has expressed its will. I ask for a plebiscite on this question."

"Quit Kashmir" analysed by Mr. H. N. Brailsford

From scores of boats on the lake, voices were shouting in chorus in their own language "Quit Kashmir". From crowded roads on shore, other voices echoed the slogan. It was addressed to the Maharaja of one of the biggest of the Indian States. His subjects were dispersing after one of the most memorable meetings ever held in Kashmir. The scene of it was the courtyard of an ancient mosque, some miles from Srinagar, which is a famous shrine because it cherishes a hair of the prophet's beard.

Looking down from a gallery on the many coloured turbans of the crowd I estimated their numbers at ten or twelve thousand.

It was a serious gathering and twice a mullah chanted prayers. The chief speaker was the most popular leader Kashmir has produced in this generation. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and could dominate any crowd by

his stature alone, but it was his combination of courage with friendliness that made him universally beloved.

With the aid of a microphone, he held the rapt attention of the vast crowd and it was obvious that he won their assent. A bolder speech was never made in any of the Indian States. In most of them, there are parties which demand responsible government. But this was a challenge to the dynasty itself.

Sheikh Abdullah based his case on one of the most iniquitous records of the East India Company. A hundred years ago, it sold Kashmir and its people to the ruler of the neighbouring State of Jammu. This transaction is recorded in the Treaty of Amritsar, which required from Maharaja Gulab Singh a payment in cash equivalent to about £400,000 and a token tribute annually of "one horse, twelve goats (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls." In return for this sum, he and his heirs have ruled as autocrats down to the present day.

Here was a tempting theme which only a tame speaker could have spoiled, and Sheikh Abdulla is a brilliant and magnetic orator. He drew the logical conclusion and called for the cancellation of the Treaty. The real significance of his speech lay in its revolutionary implications, its denial of the Maharaja's right to rule. It was a demand for a clean break with the past. Like every Indian democrat, Sheikh Abdulla is bent on securing responsible government and adult suffrage, but he meant more than this when he challenged the dynasty. His real aim is to sweep away the feudal system which has made of this lovely valley one of the most backward and benighted regions of India.

The peculiarity of Kashmir's case is that the ruler and the subjects are of different creeds. The mass of the population, 93 per cent of it, is Muslim, whereas the Hindu Maharaja governs through a ruling class of Dogras and Rajputs drawn from his own ancestral domains of Jammu. No Kashmiri may enter his army and there is an Arms Act which permits Rajputs to own firearms, a privilege denied to men of other stocks. The lower ranks of

the civil administration were, until recently, the monopoly of the Kashmiri Brahmins, though latterly, room has been made for Muslim candidates. Part of the explanation is that the Muslim population includes only four literates in a hundred, while the Hindu and Sikh minorities are much better educated.

The Muslims have other grievances also, which make it easy to rally them against Hindu rule. Thus, the killing of a cow may be punished by ten years of rigorous imprisonment.

The backwardness of the Muslim population is due mainly to its poverty but its peculiarly reactionary clergy who discouraged modern education and specially the teaching of science must bear part of the responsibility.

It was inevitable when a movement for reform did belatedly begin fifteen years ago, that it should take at the start a communal form. The Muslim masses felt that they were being exploited by the armed Hindu minority and a formidable opposition came into being under the name of the Muslim Conference, with Sheikh Abdullah, then a young teacher of science, as its beloved and dynamic leader. It had to face an effort of repression as savage as it was ineffective—martial law, wholesale imprisonment, murderous volleys from the State troops, public floggings.

In the end it was only when British troops marched in, that the authority of the Maharaja was restored. The Maharaja then conceded some timid reforms, notably, a powerless Legislative Assembly in which there sat a minority of elected members chosen by about three per cent. of the population. An effort was made, not without success, to conciliate the upper and middle class of the Muslims who could sometimes be bought by jobs and grants of land.

The moral effects of communal inequality have been disastrous, but the real causes of the poverty and backwardness of this beautiful land are social and economic. Much of its soil is fertile. It has an abundance of water. From the snows of the Himalayan heights that wall it

in unlimited hydroelectric power could be drawn. Its cool and bracing climate favours human energy and its people are industrious. They till terraced mountain slopes with laborious patience.

The forests should be a great source of wealth and there is copper lying unworked in the mountains. Wool and silk are the traditional industries, and no craftsman in all Asia surpass the Kashmiris in taste and skill. With better communications this beautiful valley, with its woods and lakes and cooling snows should be the playground of India.

Today, its peasants are sunk in unimaginable poverty. Their mud huts contain hardly a tract of visible property, save a few pots and water jars. When I put my questions in a typical village, every household was in debt, and the usual rate of interest was 48 per cent. If a peasant owns his holding, it is rarely big enough to feed his family throughout the year, and he makes up the deficiency by trekking as a seasonal labourer across the mountains to the Punjab. He has no land; he works as a share-cropper and pays to the owner by way of rent, one-half of all his produce. His wooden plough dates from the dark ages and his cattle, if he has any, are of such miserable breeds that they are hardly worth the trouble of milking. Worse than all this, much of the land is held under feudal tenure by great landlords, known as Jagirdars, who draw their tribute from the cultivators, as a reward for some service rendered to the Maharaja or his ancestors. Most of them are absentees and the worst of them are above the law.

The peasants, taxed to the limit of their endurance and subject to an administration that is corrupt from top to bottom, are voteless, unorganized and helpless in their ignorance. In the village where I made my inquiries not a single child went to the school. Their under-nourishment was obvious at a glance, and the women complained of the total lack of medical care.

Here, then, in the misery of these villages is the background to Sheikh Abdulla's revolutionary demand "Quit Kashmir". The hopeful thing about this movement

is that though it started in 1931 on communal lines some Hindus and Sikhs shared its efforts and sufferings, and in 1939 it opened its doors to these allies and changed its name to the National Conference. From that day onward though its membership is still overwhelmingly Muslim, it has worked with the States People's Conference an ally of the Indian National Congress. Since it took this step, its social programme has become steadily more advanced. But for this boldness it had to pay a heavy penalty. A split opened in its ranks and under the leadership of a powerful Muslim divine, the more conservative of its middle class members reformed the Muslim Conference. Under Mr. Jinnah's patronage, this has grown in recent years into a formidable rival.

The natural sequel to Sheikh Abdullah's daring speech on the shores of the lake would have been his instant arrest. It did not happen because he was engaged in negotiating with the Muslim Conference for the formation of a united front. Had they succeeded, the Maharaja, facing a solid organization of all his subjects, could have retained his throne only by conceding responsible government. But the leaders of the Muslim Conference, who are in earnest over the redress of communal grievances, are less eager to end this feudal despotism. They called on Sheikh Abdulla to abandon his Hindu allies and merge his organization in theirs, whereupon Abdulla broke off the negotiations. Instantly, the Maharaja's Government struck and arrested Shiekh Abdulla with over 300 of his chief supporters. The demonstrations of protest that followed were ruthlessly suppressed by the State troops, who fired on the processions, killing eight persons and wounding many more.

How long the masses who keep up their hartal in Srinagar can maintain the struggle I do not know, for I left Kashmir before the repression began. But I think their loyalty to their imprisoned leaders will be confirmed.

Thanks to the curse of communal divisions the reign of autocracy has been prolonged for a time in Kashmir. It will not long survive the coming of Independence.

CHAPTER II

EVENTS

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru announces arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah in a statement to the Press on May 21, 1946.

"I have just learnt that Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and Vice-President of the All-India States Peoples Conference has been arrested yesterday afternoon by the Kashmir State authorities. At my request he was coming to Delhi for consultation. He was arrested 'en route' at Ghari, 100 miles from Srinagar. I do not know the circumstances or ostensible reasons for this arrest but it is obvious that this is a very serious matter both for the Kashmir State and for the States peoples' movement all over India. It is becoming increasingly evident that there is a general tendency in many States to attack the peoples' movement. Whether this is due to a desire to queer the pitch at a critical moment or whether it is just the normal functioning of the State authorities I do not know. But I am convinced that this kind of thing cannot take place without the support and countenance of the Political Department and their agents. We know very well that in such matters it is the Resident who plays a dominant role. What has happened in Faridkot, I am told, has been done with the advice of the Resident or whatever he is called. It is perhaps as well that this question of the States peoples and their rulers and the Political Department is thus brought to a point as to whose will prevails ultimately in the States. Is the Political Department to continue as of old? Is the ruler also to continue in his old ways of irresponsible autocracy? What has happened to all the brave declarations made in the Chamber of Princes? What of the future when we are

told India will be independent and the peoples will be supreme? Does any one imagine that the States will continue as they have done with just minor changes in the facade? So far as the States peoples are concerned and their organisation which I have the honour to represent they will never agree to this, and all talk of political changes based on a continuation of the States system in its old form is just empty and fruitless. In order to consider all the vital developments in the States a meeting of the General Council of the All-India States Peoples Conference has been convened for June 8th, 9th and 10th in Delhi. That Council, which represents all the major and minor states of India, will take full cognisance of these developments and will no doubt lay down its policy as to how to meet them."

**Observations by the Special Correspondent of the
Globe News Agency on June 10, 1946, of the events sub-
sequent to the arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah.**

"Monday May 20, was the D-Day and 4 p.m. was the zero hour. The cannons in the Hari Parbad Fort boomed a salute of 21 guns announcing the arrival of the Maharaja in his summer Capital (Srinagar) and simultaneously telegraph wires buzzed the coded message informing the police headquarters in Srinagar that Sheikh Abdullah was arrested at Garhi, a bottleneck on the Srinagar-Rawalpindi Road. The signal was given and swarms of Gurkha and Dogra troops occupied every strategic point in and around Srinagar and literally threw a steel ring round it. With clock work precision a countrywide man-hunt immediately began and within a few hours hundreds of people were arrested and taken in military transports to the Badami Bagh Cantonment for military custody. Gurkhas were given rifles and plenty of ammunition. Dogras were detailed to search houses and effect arrests and Kashmiri policemen were asked to patrol the streets with lathis in their hands. An operational headquarter was set to combine and co-ordinate the police and military forces and operations throughout the state were directed through this operational headquarters. Lorries

were protected with thick wire guaze and heavy metal bumpers, soldiers were given steel helmets and officers and magistrates carried revolvers. Dozens of motor cycles despatch riders stood by day and night at the Operational Headquarters in case telephone communications were paralysed. Mobile contingents armed to the teeth patrolled day and night combing every nook and corner of both the Srinagar city and countryside. That was on Monday and Tuesday.

By Wednesday about three hundred people were arrested and more than 20 were killed, besides hundreds injured. The instructions to the military were to avoid fire if possible but if necessary then shoot.

Yet the press notes reported only one killed on Tuesday and later on took up the figure to six. Press correspondents who filed detailed news messages later came to grief when they realised that the press telegrams were detained arbitrarily for 24 hours and even more, censored, mutilated and finally signalled to the destinations when they had lost all their news value. A correspondent's copy said that six people were killed but the State censor "corrected" the figure to one.

On Wednesday and Thursday the military took up positions at all important road junctions and on all bridges and ordered all passers-by to walk in lines, one by one with hands up shouting "Maharaj Bahadur Ki Jai". Those that hesitated or resented were beaten with rifle butt and often pricked on their backs with bayonet ends. Later people were ordered to walk with one leg leaping like lame men and shouting "Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai". Some were forced even to walk on their knees. Old men and respectable citizens were forced to crawl on the roads at the point of rifle. Shops were looted and fruit and cigarette vendors robbed. Terror reigned throughout the city for full 48 hours and all shops were closed and people kept indoors due to fear. Lawyers, professors and even Government servants were forced to fill up trenches and sweep the roads. Colleges were deserted as students, boys and girls, dared not stir out of their homes.

A certain old shopkeeper who refused to give free cigarettes was dragged out of the shop by Gurkhas and made to lie flat on the ground and beaten with rifle butts till he became unconscious. He died the next day.

An official informally admitted that it was part of the carefully planned "total war" against Sheikh Abdullah's declaration of an "open rebellion". But the man who raised the banner of revolt and his close associates were in jail within a few hours after the commencement of the blitz. It was the poor people who had to face "total war".

Why was Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah arrested? He appealed to the Cabinet Mission to abrogate the Treaty of Amritsar and raised the slogan of "Quit Kashmir". Kashmir was sold to the present Ruling Family by the East India Company exactly 100 years ago for fifty lakhs of rupees. Today it pays a 'dividend' of five crores annually. Sheikh Abdulla said that this transaction was illegal and called on the people to fight it out.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's statement to the press on the happenings in Kashmir after the arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah.

Both as the president of the All-India States Peoples' Conference and as a Kashmiri I have been greatly troubled by the recent developments in Kashmir. I have said little about them so far, because I wanted more facts. My first impulse was to go to Kashmir, but I refrained from doing so till I had more information. I know that the kind of messages that we have been getting through the press agencies are completely one sided and unreliable. These press agencies only send out messages approved by the state authorities. I have now had a vivid account of the happenings in Kashmir from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mr. Dwarka Nath Kachru who have recently arrived here. They will be issuing statements themselves and so I need not repeat what they are going to say.

Many questions have been put to me about the new orientation given to the popular agitation in Kashmir with the demand for quit Kashmir based on the Amritsar Treaty. It has been, and is, the policy of the All-India States Peoples' Conference to demand full responsible Government in all the states under the aegis of the ruler who is to act as a constitutional head of the state. That has also been the policy of the Kashmir National Conference of which Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is the president and leader.

During the last few months, however, the state authorities have been pursuing a policy of direct hostility to the popular movement in Kashmir and trying to disrupt it by various undesirable methods, including encouragement of the communal issue.

The position of the popular Minister there, Mirza Afzal Baig, became impossible and he had to resign. Subsequently, in defiance of their own rules, they appointed another person who was till then also a member of the Kashmir National Conference as Minister. This was the result of a secret intrigue about which no one knew.

There was considerable resentment at these tactics of the State authorities and feeling against them grew. Evidently, they were bent upon creating trouble and many weeks ago they started bringing in the state army to the valley and distributing it at various strategic points.

Some weeks ago a committee of the National Conference sent a memorandum to the Cabinet delegation raising the question of the Amritsar Treaty and demanding that this treaty be abrogated and Kashmir be ruled by the people of the state. This new policy reflected the growing tension in the state and the rising temper of the people against the state administration. There were many charges also of corruption and nepotism in the state administration. The new policy had not been endorsed by the National Conference or its executive. Normally, it would have been considered by that executive on 26th of this month.

But meanwhile events marched ahead. Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla spoke publicly about this new policy. Personally I think that it was unfortunate that a marked variation in the policy both of the All-India States Peoples' Conference as well as of the Kashmir National Conference should have been made without the full consideration of the respective bodies. But I recognise the feeling which gave rise to this policy in Kashmir and the total ineptitude of the state authorities which gave rise to that feeling.

I should like to make it clear that the policy of All-India States Peoples' Conference remains what it was — responsible Government under the aegis of the rulers. Indeed no one can change it except the Conference itself.

But events in Kashmir, as also happenings elsewhere in the states, are repeatedly bringing this issue before the people of the states and it is possible that unless quick changes towards responsible Government take place in the states, the rulers may no longer be welcome even as constitutional heads. There is a great deal of talk of dynastic rights and privileges but no dynasty or individual can claim to override the fundamental rights of the people. If the rulers remain, they can only do so by the goodwill and desire of their own people, and not by compulsion of external or any other authority. Sovereignty will have to reside in the people and what follows will, thus, necessarily, be according to the wishes of the people.

I am not interested in the legal implications of the Amritsar Treaty or any other treaty. I am interested primarily in the good of the people and their right to decide for themselves what their Government should be.

While, therefore, I think it regrettable that the issue of the ruler continuing or not was raised in Kashmir at this stage without reference to the organisations concerned, I must make it clear that it is open to any individual or group to raise that issue, if it chooses to do so on its own responsibility. If this is done in a peaceful way, no state has a right to suppress it.

What happened in Kashmir clearly demonstrates the desire of the state authorities to avail themselves of any pretext to crush the popular movement. I have requested Shaikh Mohammad Abdulla to come to Delhi for consultation. At a public meeting in Srinagar he announced this fact and said that he was going to Delhi within a few days. He further directed that no public meeting or agitation should take place during his absence from Kashmir. It was clear that he wished to discuss the whole situation with me before taking any other step.

Three days later he was on his way from Srinagar to Rawalpindi when he was arrested and about the same time a large number of his colleagues, both Muslim and Hindu, were arrested at various places in Kashmir.

The whole of the valley was handed over to military administration. The police being Kashmiris were withdrawn. A reign of terrorism and frightfulness then began. Kashmir has practically been cut off from the outside world since then and martial law prevails there. There have been conflicts with crowds and firing on numerous occasions. My information is that far more people than officially admitted have been killed. A much larger number who were wounded were sent to jails instead of hospitals. Srinagar is almost a city of the dead where movement is difficult and large numbers of people are practically interned in their own houses.

Apart from the many hundreds who have been put in prison, clashes occur daily and even women have been shot down. But what is far worse is the deliberate attempt reminiscent of Martial Law days in the Punjab in 1919 to humiliate human beings. I understand that people are made to crawl in some of the streets, that sometimes they are made to take off their turbans to clean the streets and pavements, that they are made to shout at the point of the bayonet "Maharaj Ki Jai." Dead bodies are not handed to the relatives for burial according to religious rites, but are soaked in petrol and burnt. The mosques, including their inner shrines, have been occupied by the military. A wall of the Juma Masjid of Srinagar has been knocked down to allow passage for

military lorries. A dangerous feature of the situation is the deliberate attempt to foment communal trouble.

All this, and very much more, is happening in Kashmir today. It passes one's comprehension how any Indian officials should behave in this barbarous and inhuman way to their fellow countrymen.

But humanity apart, surely there could be no more effective method to make the position of the ruler intolerable to his people. The military forces under their British officers may, for the moment, succeed in shooting and killing and overawing the people of Kashmir. How long will they do that and what will be the results? Are they going to make the people loyal to the Maharaja at the point of the bayonet? That is not the way human beings function and that certainly is not the way the Kashmiri is going to function.

What part the Maharaja has in this sorry business I do not know. But undoubtedly he will have to suffer for the policy of his administration. In any event the Ministers of the Maharaja must shoulder this responsibility and they will have to answer for this before not only the people of Kashmir, but the public opinion of India. What again is the part of the Resident and the Political Department in this business? They too will have to make it clear where they stand in this matter.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of any policy, there are certain limits beyond which no government dare go, except at its peril. The Kashmir Government has gone beyond these limits in its desire to crush a popular movement which is firmly established in the hearts of the Kashmiris.

Every one who knows Kashmir knows also the position of Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla there. He is the Sher-e-Kashmir beloved of the people in the remotest valleys of Kashmir. Numerous legends and popular songs have grown around his personality. He has been, and is, one of my most valued colleagues in the states peoples movement whose advice has been sought in all important matters.

Does anybody think that we are going to desert him or his comrades in Kashmir because the Kashmir State authorities have got a few guns at their disposal? We shall stand by the people of Kashmir and their leaders in this heavy trial that they are going through.

If they have erred in any matter, we shall tell them so frankly, but for the moment their blood is being shed in that lovely and fertile valley and all talk of legal niceties is quibbling. The fate of nations, when passions are aroused is not decided by lawyer's arguments.

Kashmir by itself is important, but this issue obviously affects all the states in India and it is for all of them to consider its significance, more specially at this time when we are supposed to be hammering out the future of India. It is a bad sign at this particular moment for the blood of a people to be shed and for state authorities to display their military might in repressing their own people. The talks that we are having about India's future become pale and shadowy before this grim reality. Things have gone far in Kashmir, perhaps too far already. Yet, they might grow worse. It is up to everyone concerned with Kashmir or with the states generally to try his utmost to cry halt to this. The Kashmir State authorities should also give thought to the inevitable consequences of their actions.

I have postponed my visit to Kashmir for the present because I was not quite sure that I could render effective help at this stage. I want to help, as far as I can, in ending this terribly bitter conflict and the moment I feel that I can be of such help I shall go.

Meanwhile, I would appeal to all concerned, especially the newspapers, to avoid giving a communal turn to what is happening in Kashmir. I have noticed with deep regret some highly intemperate articles in the Lahore press. It has been the policy of the state authorities to encourage communal troubles. We must not fall into this trap.

To the state authorities I would say that their actions are bringing grave discredit on their name and no government can live with that disgrace attached to it. The

world still remembers Amritsar and Jallianwala Bagh. Are we to have yet another gruesome memory to pursue us in the days to come?

Let there be an end of all this and a calm consideration of the issues at stake. They will require all the wisdom and forbearance that we may possess.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's statement on the arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah issued on May 24, 1946 from Peshawar.

"My heart goes out to Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and his band of loyal and selfless workers in this hour of their supreme trial," said Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, commenting on the arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and the events in Kashmir.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan added: "The arrest of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and the killing of innocent men and women has caused great pain. Had it not been on account of my preoccupation in the matter of Cabinet Ministers' proposals I would have gone to Kashmir to be with the people there. As a Khudai Khidmatgar, I consider this a sacred duty as India and the States are on the threshold of great constitutional changes, we are to work arm in arm to build a new India with a view to raise economic, social, moral and political level of the people of India so that India of tomorrow can take her rightful place in the coming body of world powers.

It is high time that the rulers of Indian States changed their mental outlook and consider themselves as true servants of the people.

CHAPTER III

ACCOUNT OF HAPPENINGS

The facts about planned repression as revealed by the Prime Minister and the Governor of Kashmir in their several interviews to the correspondents of newspapers.

"The bald-headed big jawed Premier Kak told me "We have been preparing for it for eleven months and now we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it. Interview with "Hindustan Times" Special Correspondent on 27th May, 1946.

"Three units of Kashmir State Troops were recently flown from the Middle East to meet such an emergency". Premier Kak's interview with the "Hindustan Times" Special Correspondent on 27-5-46.

Maharaj Krishen Dhar, Governor of Kashmir, told the "Statesman" Special Correspondent on 27th May, "We planned ahead with the help of the police and military. The combined operation of the two alone we knew could save the situation. The fusion has worked well and yielded good results. My faith in stern measures before the trouble spread has been justified."

"Mr. Ramachandra Kak, Premier of Kashmir, in a long talk assured me that all excesses have been stopped as soon as they came to the notice of the authorities." "Hindustan Times" Special Correspondent, 29-5-46.

Pandit Dwarkanath Kachru, General Secretary, All-India States Peoples' Conference, who was in Kashmir when the trouble began, in a statement to the Janta on June 2, 1946, says:

Sheikh Abdullah delivered his last public speech on

the 16th of May and during the course of that speech he declared that he was closing the present programme of mass public meetings and he was soon proceeding to Delhi to discuss the whole situation with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the All India States Peoples' Conference. Further programme, he continued, would be made known to the people on his return from Delhi. From 16th to 21st, a period of five days, there was no noticeable activity on the part of the National Conference and in fact there would have been none till the return of Sheikh Saheb from Delhi.

On the 21st morning Sheikh Saheb left for Delhi via Rawalpindi but the same afternoon while he was nearing Domel, he was arrested and shortly after brought to Srinagar.

The movement, which is sporadic and spontaneous, was the direct result of the extreme measures of suppression adopted by the government. Naturally the National Conference leadership clapped in jails can hardly be held responsible for the subsequent acts of the people. There is nothing communal about the movement and dozen of Hindus, some of them prominent leaders of the National Conference, have been arrested and put in jails. There is no basis in the rumour that the National Conference is taking a swing towards communalism. Sheikh Abdullah appealed to all parties and all communities to join this movement and left it at that.

No personal abuse or any vulgar oaths, often uttered by irresponsible street urchins and persons, have been recognised or permitted by the Conference leadership except the normal slogans, and cries appropriate to a movement like this. I have personally heard Sheikh Saheb severely objecting to the personal abuse uttered by some irresponsible people.

Lastly, and this is very significant, the government took the initiative in declaring war on the people and soon after the arrest of Sheikh Saheb, much before the news of his arrest had reached the people at large, the

whole valley was handed over to military and all civil administration suspended. This extreme step, I believe, was unwarranted and naturally proved insulting and provocative. Further, as if the normal judicial machinery was not enough to cope with the situation, officers were selected from the various departments of the government and sent out with full magisterial powers to deal with the situation. A state of siege over the whole valley was declared almost immediately after Sheikh Saheb's arrest and it looked as if an army of occupation was marching into an enemy territory. With the flinging of the military machine of the State into the field, mass arrests, unbearable harassment and indignities, intimidation and ghastly scenes of torture and victimisation became noticeable everywhere. One ruthless blow had paralysed the entire life of the city and had stunned the people into mute submission. Overnight the whole city, otherwise bubbling with life and excitement, became still and the silence of the graveyard pervaded the whole scene. German towns, occupied by allied forces, could probably not have looked worse than what the beautiful town of Srinagar looked for hours after the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

On 22nd May, the first day after the arrests, I went down into the city and roamed about the empty streets. Earlier there was firing at five places and several were injured and killed. The Government announced that total deaths numbered fifteen; but a subsequent inquiry revealed that about six had been killed during the firing of that morning and dozens had been injured. Later on towards the evening I also went to the National Hospital and saw some of the wounded. Eleven persons had been admitted in this hospital of whom one died two hours after admission and three were discharged after their wounds were dressed. The remaining seven were detained in the hospital and I had an opportunity of examining their wounds and inquiring after them. They were all serious cases. Many of them had injuries towards their hind portions suggesting that they were obviously shot

at while in the act of running away. One of the persons I saw had a bullet shot through his thigh which had gone up and penetrated into the loins. Evidently he was shot at while lying prostrate on the ground.

Going down into the city, especially below the second bridge, looked frightful at the start. All the bridges were occupied by the military on both the sides and none was allowed to cross. Nobody walked in the streets. There was complete hartal throughout the city and only occasionally did one come across a pedestrian hurrying away into a bye-lane. At several places I attempted to cross the bridges, but at each place I was prevented from doing so. At the seventh bridge when I insisted on crossing to the other side they permitted me to cross the river in a boat. But subsequently they changed their mind and allowed me to cross the bridge. Deserted streets presented a gloomy look and only dogs lurked about in the corners. Majahid Manzil was guarded by soldiers on the outside and inside. They lay on the lawns. Near Safakadal, Zanana Hospital, I heard the distant hum of a truck and soon a vehicle loaded with troops passed me. I looked up and one of them levelled a gun at me. I smiled and the soldier challenged me to come forward. Nothing happened and we took to our paths. After crossing the river at the seventh bridge the streets became gloomier still. There was firing in that locality and a few minutes after I came upon a house where women and children were weeping. Their son had been shot dead and they were weeping behind closed doors.

That was Srinagar on the first day of "Military Raj". Subsequently, I learnt that similar things had been repeated in all the towns of the State. Mass arrests, shooting, victimisation and crawling orders had become the order of the day.

The State government have taken shelter behind "Hindu Raj in danger" and such other slogans and refuse to recognise the fact that the present problem in Kashmir is a political problem demanding immediate attention.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a statement to the press on May 27, 1946, suggests how things should not have been done by the Kashmir Government.

"Kashmir affords a notable illustration of how things must not be done. So long as there was some attempt at co-operation between the State administration and the National Conference, unsatisfactory as this was, there was no possibility of trouble. The moment this policy was reversed on the part of the State the situation underwent a progressive change for the worse.

"When and how this occurred the Prime Minister, Mr. Kak, in a Press interview has stated: 'We have been preparing for it for 11 months and we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it.'

"Mr. Kak became Prime Minister 11 months ago. Previously there had been a succession of other Prime Ministers. Gradually each was pushed out from the picture till Mr. Kak emerged as the Prime Minister and supported this new policy. I was in Kashmir in July-August last soon after Mr. Kak had become Prime Minister.

"One noticed the beginnings of the new policy, although the National Conference was still co-operating with the Government and one of its men was a Minister. The Minister had a hard time and ultimately resigned.

"One can understand, after Mr. Kak's statement, why the Minister had this difficult time, for the new Prime Minister was deliberately preparing to fight and crush ruthlessly and without apology the Kashmir National Conference.

"Obviously the Minister could not fit in and had to go. In fact the conditions that were created made it impossible for any one to remain a Minister as they made it impossible for any popular organisation like the National Conference to continue to offer its co-operation to the State authorities.

"Recent developments are explained by this frank admission of the Kashmir Prime Minister. He was out for trouble and he has got it relying on his army and making careful military preparations for his grand coup. These included the transport of Kashmir troops by air from the Middle East.

"During my stay in Kashmir last year I found that the National Conference went more towards co-operation with the authorities than most other popular organizations in the States. In spite of this they were treated shabbily and I charge the Prime Minister with deliberately encouraging faction and communalism so as to weaken the National Conference.

"Later, when the question of Mirza Afzal Beg's resignation arose, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah refused to take any precipitate action. Twice he consulted me and showed me the correspondence that had taken place. I agreed with him ultimately that there was no course but for the Mirza Saheb to resign.

"While we pondered and considered and hesitated, the Prime Minister went ahead with his preparations. I am astonished that a man with his ability should say that Sheikh Abdullah or the National Conference precipitated a crisis.

"The big mistake they made was not to realize what the State policy was and to continue to offer their co-operation for so long. It was only during the last few days that this realization fully dawned upon them and they began to think in terms of self-defence.

"I have seen reports of one of the last speeches delivered by Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar before his arrest. Even then he said that he would accept responsible government under the aegis of the ruler, provided the ruler was only a constitutional head. The truth is that the Kashmir State organization from the Prime Minister downwards has irritated the people of Kashmir beyond measure. Nothing moves in Kashmir and it is heart-breaking to set that the paradise on earth is being wasted because of incompetence. Serious charges are made against the administration.

"The Maharaja, who kept out of local politics, has given a blank cheque to the present Prime Minister and others extends itself now to the Maharaja also for he is ultimately responsible.

"He has not only kept aloof from his people, but even his Ministers could not approach him easily. His sole contact with the outside world is the Prime Minister.

Mr. Kak has said he would welcome my visit to Kashmir. I shall go when the time comes. When I do, my first object will be to see and consult Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference. Will Mr. Kak give me facilities for this purpose? Will he agree to a full and impartial inquiry into all that has happened during the past few weeks, including, of course, the ruthless policy of which he is so enamoured?

"If he is pleased with his activities he should not be afraid of an inquiry. Mr. Kak has taken full responsibility for his policy. Let him justify it before an impartial tribunal. It is not an insignificant matter to prepare for 11 months for an attack on a popular organization and then hand over the State to a military administration with all the consequences that this entails.

"Mr. Kak, when he talks of being ruthlessly firm, talks a language which no statesman or one responsible for the fate of human beings can indulge in. His language condemns him and his policy. The blimps have ceased to exercise control in most countries. It is the unfortunate fate of Kashmir today to be in charge of blimps.

"Mr. Kak has raised vital issues. I welcome his clear enunciation of policy for it will mean an easier decision when the time comes for a final decision and that cannot be long delayed in Kashmir or in any other State. There has been a great deal of talk of long periods of preparation for the States to bring them up to the common level. People will have to hurry up now for events are marching swiftly to their pre-destined end."

CHAPTER IV

IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS' ACCOUNT OF REPRESSION

Mr. Bhabha, a member of the South African delegation, in a statement from Surat on June 5, 1946 said:

"The situation in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest was similar to that which one would have found in Hitlerite Germany. Savagery and brutality committed by the military on innocent men and women by forcing people to shout "Maharaja Bahadur-ki-Jai" at the point of bayonet, shooting at women processionists were reminiscent of the worst forms of Nazism. Though the Kashmir Government has tried to white-wash the events, every word of Pandit Nehru's statement is correct to the core."

Mr. Bhabha added: Pandit Nehru should immediately visit Kashmir despite the Kashmir Premier's threat to ban his entry into the state. His presence there will have the same salutary effect as it had at Faridkot.—A. P. I. "National Call," 6-6-46.

The Reports of some Newspapers and News Agencies:

"Hindustan Times", May 26, 1946. "To ensure peace elaborate arrangements are being made by the State Military which has been posted all over the city. Important bridges and roads are strictly guarded and pedestrians are allowed to cross the main bridges in single file with hands up. Many meeting places and the areas around mosques are under military control and hartal continues in the city.—"(Globe and A. P. I.).

Special Correspondent, "Statesman", Srinagar June 1, 1946. I have again met the big four....General Scott did

not deny that in some places soldiers had made people walk with raised hands. They had in some instances even forced people to cry "Maharaja Bahadur-ki-Jai". "Soldiers are not saints," said General Scott.

Special Correspondent, "Statesman", Srinagar, May 28, 1946. Many shop-keepers in the city have complained to me of soldiers helping themselves to their wares and making them part with their belongings. Men and women at bridges were asked to cross with their hands up and in a few cases even made to crawl.

Special Correspondent, "Hindustan Times", Srinagar, May 28, 1946. The troops....snatched cigarettes, estables and even petty cash from small shop-keepers in the bazaars where they were posted. They forced people to shout "Maharaja-ki-Jai"....They even forced some people to hop or crawl across some bridges....Troops made the people put up their hands while crossing bridges.

"Statesman" Special Correspondent, Srinagar, May 28, 1946. Another fact which acted as oil on a smouldering fire was the shooting incident within the compound of Khanqa Mualla, the old mosque last Tuesday. Today Conference workers showed me round the building, pointing excitedly to blood marks on the out walls of the mosque and on its threshold where they said one men fell dead.

Special Correspondent, "Hindustan Times", Srinagar, May 28, 1946. Over two thousand men, women and children gathered at the 650 years old mosque, called Khanqa Mualla this afternoon once again reiterated their demands through their "Quit Kashmir Slogan". There was great excitement at the meeting. Pressmen present there were shown all round the beautiful Pagoda-like structure and the bullet marks and the blood stains on its walls. The compound of this mosque was perhaps the first scene of firing the day after the arrest of Sh. Abdullah.

The authorities' explanation is that since mosques were being used for political activity, they had to ban

meetings there. "Hindustan Times" Special Correspondent, Srinagar, 30-5-46.

"Statesman", Delhi, May 25, 1946. Srinagar today is a city of silence. As I approached here via Baramulla, Mirakudal, usually a busy shopping centre where happy visitors smilingly buy expensive hand-made wares wore a deserted appearance. Nearly all shops were closed. The city has been observing hartal for the past three days. The place of shoppers has been taken by armed steel-helmeted soldiers who guard the Mira Kudal bridge which overlooks the imposing old palace..It was a dark and dead city through which I drove. Only stray dogs slunk around empty lanes as if wondering what had befallen their noisy town.

The Mujahid Manzil, the headquarters of the National Conference in Srinagar, and the adjoining open ground are under strong military and police guard. About 25 Special Magistrates have been posted in the city under whom the military and police forces work.

The military and police operations in the city and suburbs are directed by Gen. H. L. Scott, Chief of the Military Staff and Mr. Richard Powerl, Inspector-General of Police. "National Herald," Lucknow, 24-5-46.

"Statesman", Special Correspondent, Srinagar, June 1, 1946. "Last evening I visited the 500 years old Juma Mosque to investigate Pandit Nehru's allegation that the military had demolished its Eastern Wall. There is no Eastern Wall. There is however, a wooden gate fixed between brick-masonry. Two bricks of one columns have been dislodged by a military lorry.

"The injured arrested persons were taken to hospitals, but certain cases mostly of minor injuries were treated in the Jail Dispensary. "Hindustan Times", 1-6-46.

"Hindustan Times", Special Correspondent, Srinagar, May 29, 1946. "The authorities admit that in some cases bodies were buried in the absence of relatives but say that this happened only during the worst period of the disturbances.

"Hindustan Times", Special Correspondent, Srinagar, May 28, 1946. Private telephones which were cut off eight days ago have not yet been restored and this is putting business houses, newspaper offices and others to great inconvenience.

"Tribune", 22nd May, 1946. Since last night private telephone connections have been cut off, says an A. P. I. message.

The following report on Kashmir situation was cabled by Mr. Norman Cliff, Foreign Editor, "News Chronicle", on June 21, 1946, to "News Chronicle", London.

Srinagar, Kashmir. As a climax to the Kashmir revolt the Sheikh Abdullah has been brought to trial here accused of sedition because he demanded that Maharaja Sir Hari Sing should quit.

A plane is always available should Kashmir's ruler be compelled to quit—and he is only one of a number of princes who have planes ready to take to the air if the political atmosphere on the ground becomes too hot.

With more wealth outside Kashmir than in it and tidy fortunes tucked away in London and elsewhere, even if driven to quit the Maharajah and his successors need not be haunted by the fear of destitution or even the necessity to work. Over the entrances of Jhelum power works the Maharajah has an inscription reading: "There is dignity in labour and work is worship." In that sense the ruler cannot be said to be over-keen on worship.

Largely because the labour of so many of his subjects lacks the dignity of a just reward revolt is simmering in Kashmir. In all probability an all-India decision on States rule on the principle of responsible government under constitutional monarchies will be reached, but the princes will be expected to devote their energies to their constitutional duties.

"What is decided for all States we shall have no option but to put into operation here," Kashmir's Prime Minister, Rai Bahadur Ramchandra Kak, told me.

Sheikh Abdullah, a 6ft. 4in. personality, once a teacher and now Nehru's vice-president of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference and leader of the National Movement in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, leapt impatiently ahead of national policy and demanded "Quit Kashmir". He was arrested on the way to Delhi to see Nehru before his policy had been endorsed or any plan to enforce it had been organised.

"Can we be blamed for quelling?" Premier Kak asked me. And with ruthless efficiency not noticeable in other departments of administration they imprisoned Abdullah's chief supporters and with the use of military and police forces they fired upon his followers, who rioted in protest with stones as their only weapons.

Armed troops patrol the streets and a curfew prevents movement out of doors after dark. Yet meetings of defiance continue to be held under the shadow of the mosques and speakers court arrest.

I attended one of the banned meetings outside the bullet-scarred mosque of Khangi Moola (place of God). I found a big assembly shouting slogans and applauding the speakers in full view of the military and in the presence of police reporters taking notes.

A feature of the meeting was the presence of a solid phalanx of women with their babies, in a State where purdah prevails. They cast aside the face coverings of their purdah hoods, challenging identification by the police. When the meeting ended women shouting "Down with Dogra rule" led the procession, defying the troops to open fire. I saw only lathis used.

My companions were the States' Peoples' Secretary, Kachru, and police scouts who shadowed us on cycles. When we transferred from a tonga (pony trap) to a taxi we eluded them, and next day they complained that their day's diary had been spoilt.

I dined with Abdullah's defence counsel in an upstairs cafe while his police spy fed on the ground floor at his expense. "It's this or starvation," the wretch explained.

So revolt rumbles in Kashmir's summer capital, although the remainder of the State appears placid. But the Moslems, who formed 90 per cent of the population, resent rules by the Maharajah, who belongs to the Dogra caste of Hindus and employs Dogra troops to quell their revolts.

I tried hard, but in vain, to persuade the Prime Minister to welcome Nehru and try to reach an amicable settlement.

My request to call on the Maharajah startled Mr. Kak, who said I might submit written questions for His Highness. I was not surprised, when I called to collect the answers, to be told my questions had been lost. I dictated them to a secretary and was then told they were more in the Prime Minister's province.

Efforts to get written answers from him failed, and we discussed other things.

When I asked Mr. Kak for permission to visit Sheikh Abdullah he told me the judiciary was independent, and I must approach the district magistrate.

Pandit Maharaj Kisham Dar, Governor of the Province and a district magistrate—an intelligent man—promised I should be informed next morning of the hour at which I might see the prisoner. Next morning the promise was broken, and telephone calls and a message by hand produced no reply from the magistrate.

On the second morning he politely called on me and explained in a half-ashamed manner that he had consulted his colleagues and could not persuade them to agree.

Suspecting that he had been overruled I sought another interview with the Prime Minister, who refused to budge from the assertion that the affair was beyond his province.

Behind the shelter of these men is Sir Hari Singh, whose wealth is so great that even he cannot compute it. His whims include the collection of jewels of fabulous value and the building of sumptuous palaces. Owning

racehorses in Britain and at least two other countries in which he takes only the mildest interest, he now thinks to buy a fleet of Dakota planes.

Yet when I discussed with the Premier a local irrigation scheme he mentioned the State could not afford it.

Kashmir is advanced in some respects and backward in others. Literacy rate is only seven per cent.

He outlined a five-year plan on co-operative principles, but the co-operation expected of the community in the irrigation scheme was the provision of unskilled labour free.

Kashmir is rich not only in unmatchable natural resources—timber, water, power, silk, wool, fruit, fish, cattle, a productive soil in the valleys, and mineral and chemical deposits in the hills—but also in the inborn artistic genius and skill of craftsmanship of its people. Nowhere in the world is more exquisite woodwork, embroidery, papier mache, brass and copper work produced, the whole process of design, execution and sale being the work of the same man.

With resources such as these Kashmir should be one of the most prosperous and contented provinces in the world and its craftsmen the most highly paid. Yet nowhere in this land of abject destitution side by side with excessive riches is contrast more shocking than here.

At one end there is the playground of the well-to-do—where you can laze in Shikara on a fairy-like lake watching kingfishers and dragonflies dart among the water lilies, where luxurious houseboats are transformed into the gayest of night clubs, where every form of huntin', fishin', shootin' and trackkin' is possible amid scenery of breath-taking beauty—and in the old city of Srinagar are the most noisome dens, in which stunted children and pallid women are condemned to exist on pay that barely keeps them alive.

"But it's not peculiar to Kashmir," Premier Kak complained. "What about the thousands who sleep on the pavements in Bombay? At least here all have shelter."

Yes, even the rats can be said to have shelter.

"Our fight is for the right to be human", one Kashmiri said to me. The current film in Srinagar is "For Whom the Bell Tolls." I know for whom the bell tolls in Kashmir.

CHAPTER V

“HELP KASHMIR”

“Help Kashmir if you can”

—PANDIT NEHRU

In view of the appalling situation in Kashmir Pandit Nehru issued the following statement to the press.

“In view of the serious situation in Kashmir, I call upon the States peoples' organization, its regional councils, praja manals, lok parishads, State congresses and the like to express their sympathy with the people of Kashmir and to offer to help them if they can. I suggest that meetings might be held to this end on Sunday, June 20. If it is more convenient for any local organization, another suitable date might be chosen:

“At these meetings not only should a full expression of solidarity with the people of Kashmir be made but the demand for full responsible government in every State should be reiterated. Collections should be made for the relief of sufferers in Kashmir.

“It may be necessary later to enrol volunteers for special service in connexion with Kashmir. For the moment we must watch developments but we must be ready for all emergencies.”

CHAPTER VI

PRESS COMMENTS

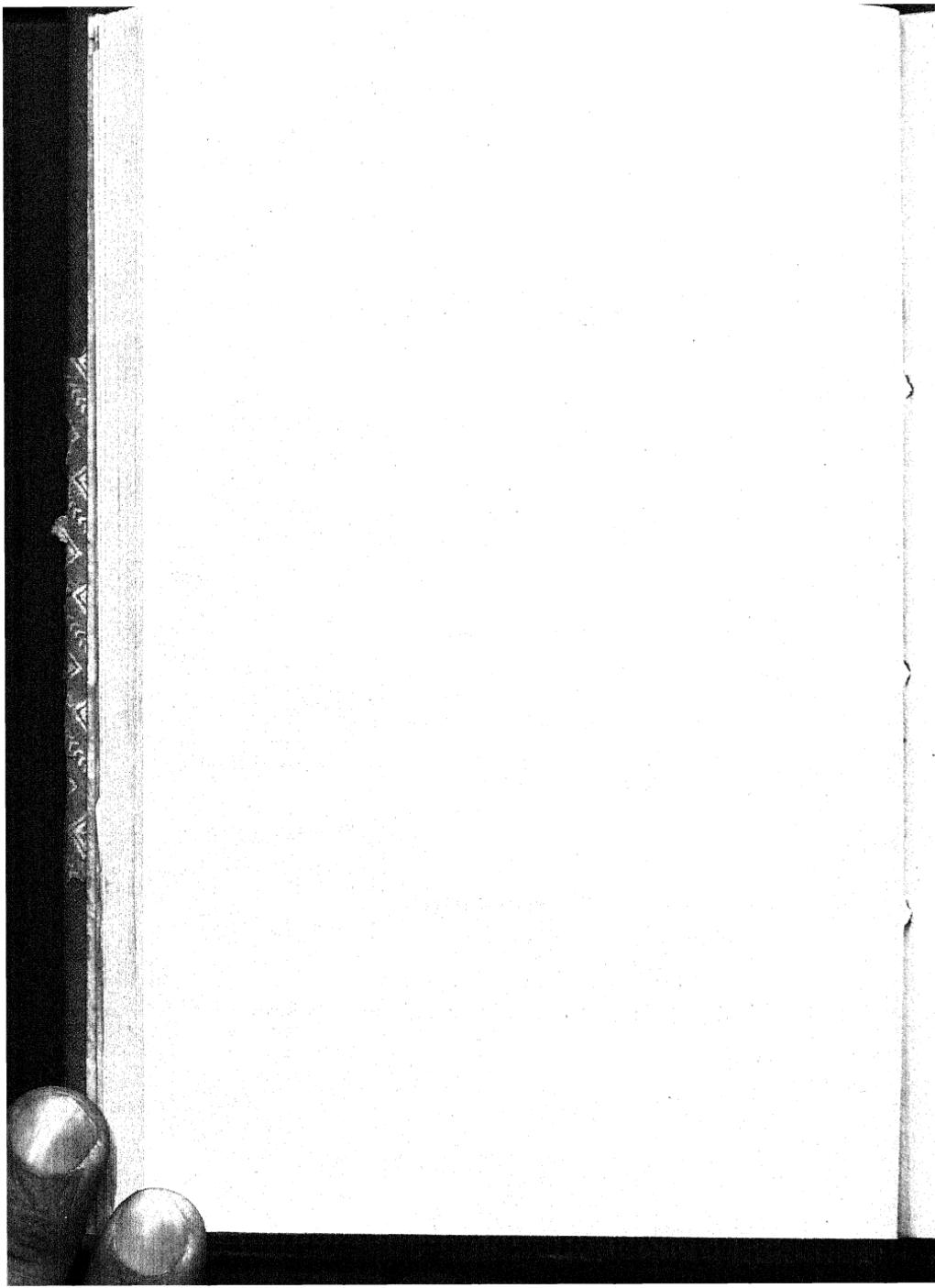
What some leading Newspapers said in the leading articles on the arrest of Shiekh Mohd. Abdullah and the situation in Kashmir.

The "Hindustan Times" on May 31, 1946 said:— "Kashmir and Srinagar in particular have passed through a week of clashes between the State forces and the National Conference movement. There have been violence and bloodshed, sabotage and lawlessness, over two dozen deaths and about 500 arrests, and much loss of public property and of business through unavoidable suspension. The latest reports show that life in Srinagar is rapidly returning to normal and that the countryside is apparently quiet. The forces of law and order have dealt sternly with those who struck for freedom and the 'republican' movement has partly gone underground and is partly directing its energies towards offering batches of volunteers for arrest. "Quit Kashmir" is the slogan of the movement which appears patterned on the 1942 struggle in British India. The leaders of the National Conference state that sabotage and violence have been spontaneous and have occurred because of the arrests of their leaders.

Our special correspondent has given a vivid account of the situation. He has contacted the Prime Minister of Kashmir and the leaders of the National Conference and has had an interview in strange circumstances even with an "underground" leader. He states that "Quit Kashmir" is not yet the official policy of the National Conference and that Sheik Abdullah before leaving for Delhi (he was arrested en route) preached the new policy, called for 15,000 do-or-die volunteers and exhorted the people to end the Dogra rule. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of



Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah
President, All-Jammu & Kashmir National Conference



the All-India States People's Conference, has not minced matters. He has pronounced it unfortunate that a marked variation was made in policy without full consideration of the National Conference or of the A.-I.S.P.C. Sheikh Abdullah is the leader of the former body and a vice-president of the latter. As stated by Pandit Nehru, the policy of the States people's organizations is still one of demanding full responsible government under the aegis of the Rulers. Since the National Conference has not been declared illegal, it is claimed on behalf of the Kashmir administration that it is not fighting the Conference but the "Quit Kashmir" movement. It is clear from our special correspondent's account that both parties were preparing for a showdown and that the State being better equipped for violence has had the upper hand.

But the issue raised by the Kashmir crisis is not a simple one of trial of physical strength. It involves a moral issue, the issue of the inherent right of the people to govern themselves. As we stated in these columns a week ago, the sovereign remedy for the present situation is the grant of responsible government to the people. Kashmir is already in the forefront of the Princely Order in the matter of constitutional reforms: it was the first State to express willingness to join the Indian Federation; it can set the pace for others by moving with the times. Destruction of autocracy is writ large on all walls, Princely or bureaucratic.

Pandit Ramchandra Kak, Kashmir's Prime Minister, told our special correspondent that he would welcome Pandit Nehru or any other leader visiting Kashmir to see things for himself. He acted unwisely in our view in failing to take counsel with Pandit Nehru before launching his policy of repression. He can retrieve the situation by taking Pandit Nehru into confidence and evolving a scheme which would meet the legitimate demands of the people for self-government. The National Conference leaders on their part must abandon the demand for ending the Dogra rule. It is futile to argue that Kashmir was "sold" to the Ruling family. Authentic records show that it was not so.

Anyway, it is not yet the aim of any political organization in this country to abolish the Princely Order. The future of the Order will be finally determined by the will of the people as self-governing institutions develop and the relative utility of various elements in the body politic is properly assessed. For the present, Pandit Nehru should be given facilities to meet the leaders in detention. A truce should be called and an impartial tribunal should go into the allegations and counter-allegations made by the two parties.

There is clear evidence that in the first two days excesses were committed by the military forces. Our special correspondent states that in some cases people were forced to shout 'Maharaj ki Jai' and to hop or crawl across some bridges. He adds, however, on the authority of the leaders of the agitation, that the situation improved after complaints reached the higher authorities. There is no unimpeachable evidence, he says, to prove that the inner shrines of mosques were entered by the troops and he denies the allegation that a wall of the biggest mosque in Srinagar was pulled down to make way for military lorries. We wish Pandit Nehru had not given currency to the various allegations, especially those concerning mosques, without reliable evidence. Those who were his informants have certainly let him down. In particular, the various Press correspondents have felt obliged to protest against the reflection cast on their independence by Pandit Nehru, again at the instance of some ill-informed informants.

We agree with Pandit Nehru's remark: "Let there be calm consideration of the issues at stake. They will require all the wisdom and forbearance that we may possess." Kashmir is of immense strategic importance to the Indian Union; self-government of its four million people has to be woven into the pattern of a polity for 400 million people. A halt must be called to the policy of repression and immediate counsel must be taken to solve the problem on democratic lines. The National Conference will do well to adhere to the charter it drew up on August 29, 1938."

The "Tribune" on May 23, 1946 said:— "Kashmir has suddenly leapt into the limelight linking itself with Faridkot. Many more States may now appear on the stage and form a formidable array against the resurgent democratic forces. Tomorrow Kashmir and Faridkot may be joined by Hyderabad and the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh feudal front may become hurtfully obvious. This will not be surprising. Feudalism is on the war-path. This is a natural historical development. British Imperialism, which is losing ground in British India, will build up defences in the B and C Groups sought to be created by the Cabinet Mission and in the Indian States. Its friend Feudalism is firmly entrenched in Indian India and it will be welcome and can dig itself in there. If even the half-hearted and half-headed declaration of the Nawab of Bhopal in favour of democracy in the States can be trampled under foot and torn to pieces in Faridkot and riddled with bullets in Kashmir, how can there be any hope of democracy being accommodated at all in the States? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's conjecture that at the bottom of Feudalism's present bellicose move is British Imperialism's instigation seems to be correct. At least the Representatives of the Paramount Power are not doing their duty towards the Indian States people. Could, for instance, Feudalism have treated the people in the deplorable manner in which it has treated them in which it has treated them in Faridkot, had the Punjab States Resident put his foot down? When our photographer was beaten and arrested at Kotkapura, we sent a telegram to the Resident, but complete official silence was the response it elicited.

And the Political Department, which has always shown astounding promptitude and activity, whenever the interests of British Imperialism have to be protected and promoted in the Indian States, is sitting unmoved and mum while fire has been opened in Kashmir and men have been killed and injured—and democracy has been sought to be suppressed. The Kashmir Police have swooped down on the Kashmir leader, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and his lieutenants including Hindu democrats and put them behind

the prison bars. These arrests are reminiscent of the Congress leaders' arrests in Bombay after their historic meeting in August 1942. What is the offence committed by Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and his co-workers? They have argued that the Amritsar treaty is no treaty; it is a mere sale deed. And they have urged that the Maharaja should quit Kashmir. We say whether the Amritsar treaty is a treaty or a sale deed, it is not valid in the year 1946 when all anti-democratic documents throughout the world have become inoperative. Further there is nothing objectionable in the demand that the Maharajah should quit Kashmir for it has been made in the sense that he should transfer all real power to the people and himself become the constitutional head of the administration. In that sense the "quit" cry may resound tomorrow in every State in India—the Maharaja or the Raja, or the Nizam or the Nawab as the symbol of a stinking anachronism may everywhere be asked to go. In fact Democracy in Indian India would have by now covered as much ground as it has covered in British India had the popular struggles in the two regions been always co-ordinated. If Indian friends and soldiers of democracy today find themselves face to face with a difficult situation in the States they have to thank themselves.

When the Indian States People's Conference meets at Delhi shortly it will have to recognise that Feudalism has unsheathed the sword and it has to be fought and defeated. If this is not done, there is a great danger to the proposed Indian Union itself. It seems to have been ordained that not the Indian States people, but the Indian princes will represent the Indian States on the Constituent Assembly. The way is thus paved for the introduction of a strong feudal element into the Indian Union. Democracy and Feudalism are incompatible and if they are brought together there is bound to be an explosion ultimately and this explosion may seriously damage, if not destroy, the Centre. Therefore it is essential that Democracy should tenaciously and vigorously fight Feudalism in the States and compel it to surrender and agree to the establishment

of wholly representative Assemblies and completely popular Ministries in them and to the representation of the States people on the Constituent Assembly. But the struggle may be hard and a bit prolonged for British Imperialism is at the back of Indian Feudalism. Has not the Cabinet Mission declared that though Britain will not retain paramountcy, she will not transfer it to India either. It clearly means that British Imperialism will be happy to see the Indian Rulers functioning as omnipotent autocrats. When the Indian States People's Conference proceeds to evolve its plan of action it should do so in the light of all these facts. Feudal usurpation has to be cancelled and the sovereignty of the States people has to be enforced everywhere—in Hyderabad, Bhopal and Rampur, in Kashmir, Bikaner and Baroda, in Patiala, Nabha and done as quickly as possible."

The "National Herald" on May 26, 1946, said:—"Kashmir is in the grip of a military regime. As in August 1942 in British India, the thoughtless arrest of Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders was followed by retaliation from the people and ruthless repression is the order of the day. Why was Sheikh Abdullah arrested? The Kashmir Government has issued a press note saying that Sheikh Abdullah and his followers delivered a series of speeches inciting people 'to destroy the Government, to repudiate allegiance to his Highness and force him to quit Kashmir'. These are one-sided allegations. It was clear that following the resignation of Mr. Beg the (elected) Minister for Public Works, from the ministry, the drift between the Government and the National Conference became widening. For some time Sheikh Abdullah had been carrying on an agitation against the Treaty of Amritsar by which Kashmir was handed over to the present ruling family. He characterised it as illegal and prepared a memorandum appealing to the Cabinet Mission to abrogate it.

On the narrow question of the Treaty of Srinagar we are unable to see the wisdom of Sheikh Abdullah's contention. He calls the treaty a sale deed; most of the treaties by which the states system survives are no better. The

Dogra dynasty is no better or no worse than the Asaf Jahs of Hyderabad, the Gaekwads of Baroda or the Holkars of Indore. Mr. K. M. Panikkar, examining the sale deed in his book, 'Gulab Singh, founder of Kashmir', says that the British Government demanded a war indemnity bond of £1,500,000 from the Lahore Durbar. Instead of paying this durbar saddled it on Gulab Singh, making it a charge on Jammu, Kashmir and all the territories between the Ravi and the Indus. The Treaty of Lahore, signed seven days before the Treaty of Amritsar, states clearly that Gulab Singh was recognised as an independent ruler by the Lahore Durbar for 'services rendered' and by the British Government for 'good conduct'. The whole princely structure stands on a flimsy basis and it does not seem right to say that the descendants of Gulab Singh are imposters while others rule by the divine right of kings. But we find that Sheikh Abdullah's pamphlet 'Quit Kashmir' is not pre-occupied with this problem. It is mostly a candid examination of the autocratic features of the Kashmir Government. We do not know the subject-matter of the speeches of Sheikh Abdullah and others, but if they were of the same tenor as the pamphlet there was no cause for action. It seems to us that the Kashmir Government has blundered seriously. If the ruler is wise, he should retrace his steps immediately, make ample reparation, punish guilty officials and replace the present discredited diarchy with full responsible government. That is the essence of 'Quit Kashmir'."

The "Amrit Bazar Patrika", on May 28, 1946, under the caption 'states' said:—"In Kashmir the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah who by the way is an opponent of the Muslim League and is a nationalist has precipitated a crisis. He is reported to have delivered a seditious speech. Had the Kashmir Durbar been gifted with a little common sense they would have ignored this technical breach of the law having regard to the present situation. The Government in British India have the good sense to ignore many such speeches. The fact is that sedition ceases to be sedition when a country is near independence. The States Governments, long under the tutelage of the political officers

of the Government of India, have no such realisation.

Kashmir and Faridkot have chosen a very inopportune moment to demonstrate that the States, generally speaking, cannot be expected to conform themselves quickly to the requirements of any given situation. The Cabinet Mission in their statement have expressed the hope that the rulers of the States will be ready and willing to co-operate in the new development of India "in their own interest." Can anybody blame the Congress Working Committee for having expressed their doubt on this score? Many will question the wisdom of the decision of the British Government that they would not transfer paramountcy even for a time to the new Government of India. The Interim Government should possess the power of the British Government till at least the States have confronted themselves to the standards of administration approximating to those of the British Indian Provinces and effected the amalgamation as suggested by Sir Ramaswami Iyer."

The "National Call" on June 2, 1946, said:—"Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the course of a public statement has made very grave and serious charges against the Kashmir administration. He has accused the Government of pre-meditated attack against the National Conference, of provoking action of disrespect to and defilement of mosques of obdurate failure to respond to public opinion, and finally of savage and brutal action, including the burning of bodies with petrol and the sending of wounded men to jail rather than to hospital. These charges made by a responsible person like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have naturally created widespread resentment against the Kashmir administration and a feeling of antipathy for those who are at its helm.

The Kashmir Government, however has its own story to tell. It has alleged that the leaders of the National Conference had been preparing for a coup d'etat for a long time to paralyze the Kashmir administration. It was intended to resort to violence and sabotage to establish a republic in Kashmir. The Kashmir Government, it is stated,

learnt of these plans, prepared itself for this emergency and frustrated the coup dietat by timely action. According to the Prime Minister, the National Conference had created a position where it was a case of "govern or get out" for the Kashmir Government. Besides this, the Prime Minister in a press statement has challenged many of the allegations made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru against the administration. He denies the charges of savagery and brutality and asserts that there have been no cases of burning bodies with petrol, of defilement of mosques or of refusal to send seriously injured persons to hospital. In the circumstances, we feel that there is genuine need for an impartial enquiry. We wish it had been possible for Pandit Nehru himself to visit Kashmir, because we have no doubt that his presence would have had the same salutary effect as it had in Faridkot. Public opinion would like to know more of the real facts from an impartial source. Unfortunately Kashmir has been a hot-bed of intrigue and partisan controversy in the past and its political life has been exploited by outside influence. It is, therefore, in the interest both of the Kashmir administration and the State people that true facts should come to light."

The "Hindustan Times" on May 24, 1946 said:

"The political situation in Kashmir has been deteriorating since the resignation from the Ministry of Mirza Afzal Beg at the end of March. The coincidence of this resignation with the arrival of the Cabinet Mission suggested that it was an astute political move of Sheikh Abdullah, President of the All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, as Mr. Beg was the representative of this body in the Ministry. Soon after the resignation, Mr. Abdullah issued a statement that the experiment of dyarchy, inaugurated in 1944, was a failure and that the popular Ministers were mere paid puppets without any real power to serve the people. He also alleged that the present Prime Minister, Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, went back on the formula of Sir B. N. Rau that it should be open to the popular Ministers to express dissent from the policy

of the Kashmir Government on the floor of the Legislative Assembly and keep neutral on any issue voted upon. The next stage was reached when Sheikh Abdulah sent a telegram to the Cabinet Delegation on the eve of their visit to Kashmir questioning the validity of the Treaty of 1846 which he characterized as the sale of the people of Kashmir into servitude. He seems to have felt that this was a psychological moment for the achievement of democratic freedom in Kashmir and started intensive agitation all over the State. It was almost inevitable that the authorities of Kashmir, like all autocracies, would reply with repression, and Sheikh Abdulah and all leading workers of the National Conference were arrested on Monday. The most surprising part of the whole affair is that the Kashmir leader was arrested on his way to Delhi where he was invited for consultation by Pandit Nehru, President of the All-India States People's Conference. If the Kashmir Government had any imagination, they would also have sent their spokesman to Delhi and sought the help of Pandit Nehru and other national leaders for an amicable settlement of the dispute. Instead, they have preferred to precipitate a crisis.

The Press note issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Government follows the conventional form. It alleges that Sheikh Abdullah and his followers have been inciting people "to destroy the existing Government, to repudiate allegiance to His Highness and force him to quit Kashmir. Unmentionable abuse was heaped upon the person of His Highness and the Ruling Family. Preparations were made on a countrywide scale with a view to taking over the Government of the State." It generally happens in large political movements that some of the workers indulge in rather wild language but we do not believe that Sheikh Abdullah or the National Conference is guilty of the charges made. In any case, repression is no remedy. People in Britain are free to advocate the abolition of monarchy and no one there suggests that such advocacy should be stopped by force. Pandit Nehru has asked: "Is the Ruler to continue in his old ways of irresponsible autocracy?"

The time has come when every Ruler of an Indian State should recognize that the days of forced loyalties are gone and that the only condition on which the princely dynasties can be preserved is complete devolution of power to Ministers responsible to the elected representatives of the people. If this is done in time and with goodwill, it is not unlikely that the people of the States will themselves want the Princes to remain as constitutional heads to ensure stability and continuity. Whether it is Kashmir or Hyderabad, the people are the true repositories of sovereignty and all attempts at repudiating this fundamental basis will strengthen the resolve of democratic movements to get rid of the Princely Order altogether. In Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Princes have peacemakers of rare goodwill who would like to save the Princes in spite of themselves. There are already powerful forces which do not want an evolutionary solution in this respect and would like to see the end of this survival of mediævalism through the revolutionary process of repression and revolt. We can appreciate the extremely difficult position of the Maharaja of Kashmir who, like the Nizam of Hyderabad, has to rule a majority belonging to another religion. He has to face the risk of the Muslim majority, under a responsible Government, deciding to convert Kashmir into a non-monarchical State like the British Indian provinces. He must, however, realize that the risk of trying to rule through repression is far greater. Immediate and unconditional offer of full responsible Government is sure to bring His Highness honour and fame and in view of the non-communal nature of the leading political organization of the State it may evoke sufficient gratitude and goodwill among the majority of his subjects to secure an honourable position to the Ruling family. Pandit Nehru has pointed out that the Resident and the Political Department of the Government of India are active agents behind the scenes. One wonders whether the short-sighted action of the Kashmir Government has had the approval of these bulwarks of autocracy."

The "Tribune" on May 25, 1946, said:

"Repression is in full swing in Kashmir. Before the happenings in that State those in Faridkot pale into insignificance. The even flow of life has been seriously disturbed in the Happy Valley and several places are reported to be under police or military rule. The statement issued by the Kashmir Publicity Committee casts a lurid light on the situation. Even the latest Kashmir Government's statement shows that there is something rotten in its territory. The widespread unrest is symptomatic of the prolonged suppression of the legitimate political aspirations of the people; and the real remedy of the malady is neither the bayonet nor the bullet. Many a time fire has been opened in Kashmir and according to the confession of the Government itself half a dozen precious lives have been destroyed. According to private advices the number of those killed is far larger. A procession of women has also been greeted with bullets and a woman has been killed. How long can this go on? The argument that the Kashmir Government has advanced in justification of the apparently excessive firing is this: Crowds are indulging in wanton destruction. But why has the tremendous popular upheaval taken place? The reason is not far to seek. Instead of the people's demand for self-government being satisfied their leaders have been spirited away. When the National Conference said that the Amritsar Treaty was no better than a sale deed and the Maharaja should quit Kashmir all that it meant was that the former should not obstruct the establishment of immediate self-government and the latter should forthwith agree to function as a constitutional Ruler. We have no doubt in our mind that on this basis there can be an agreement between the Kashmir Government and the National Conference tomorrow. After all the Kashmir Government cannot eternally keep Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and his lieutenants in jail and it cannot perpetually keep down the people with the aid of the gun. The sooner they are released and a wholly popular ministry drawn from a wholly representative Legislature is established the better for all concerned."

The "Dawn" on May 23, 1946, said:

"After a week's reign of terror, in which Dogra troops of the Dogra Ruler were let loose on the populace, the situation in Kashmir is reported to be "improving." If "improvement" means that the armed forces of the State have succeeded in terrorising the unarmed people into sullen calm, by the ruthless use of arms and by resort to other brutal methods of coercion familiarised by General Dyer during the martial law regime in Amritsar in 1919, perhaps the reports are correct. But the spirit of a long-oppressed people, once it has been roused against their exploitation and suppression by a coterie of alien and despotic rulers unsympathetic and even hostile to their natural aspirations, cannot be permanently broken by mere show of force. The authorities in Kashmir will be gravely mistaken if they lull themselves into a false sense of security merely because their superior force has triumphed for the time being.

The recent happenings are a warning to the Maharaja that the days of despotism are over, and that a Ruler who remains submerged in a sea of creature comforts, leaving the administration of his State completely in the hands of a corrupt and tyrannical oligarchy, must either mend his ways or quit. Pandit Ram Chandra Kak's policy ever since he assumed the office of Prime Minister nearly a year ago, has been one of continual provocation to the people whose accumulated feelings of resentment have now come to a head. If Sir Hari Singh's instinct of self-preservation has not been dulled by his life of ease he will refuse to share his Prime Minister's complacency that "the situation is under control" and he will immediately take personal cognizance of the discontent of his long-suffering people. The first step towards allaying that discontent must be a change in the post of Prime Minister, for as long as Mr. Kak remains in that position so long can peace be maintained only by keeping the State virtually under martial law.

While there is little doubt that popular discontent and resentment against the Kashmir Durbar had been brewing for a long time, reports of the origin of the present dis-

turbances show that in the outbreaks of violence the authorities and not the people played the initial role. This is further borne out by Prime Minister Kak's boast that he had been preparing for a showdown with the people for 11 months—the period he himself has been actually in office. Besides, many days before the trouble began several regiments of Dogra troops just returned from overseas theatres of war, were admitted to have been brought by air to Srinagar. Having thus completed their preparations, the State administration evidently felt that the time had come to make a widespread show of force in order to crush the people's urge for freedom. As the people themselves appeared to give no provocation by any overt act, the authorities precipitated a crisis by quite unnecessarily arresting Sheikh Abdullah, President of the National Conference. Even then trouble might not have assumed the dimensions it did, had not the Dogra troops surrounded the ancient mosque of Khanqah-i-Maula and started indiscriminate firing on the peaceful multitude which had collected in its full. Press correspondents in Srinagar, visiting the scene six days later saw bullet marks and bloodstains on the inside wall of the mosque. Human nature would have been very different in Kashmir had not mob violence broken out after that.

After having brought about a situation which would justify the use of force, the Kak administration indulged in unbridled repression not only in Srinagar but also in the towns of Islamabad, Bijbihara, Pampar, Baramula, Sopore and Ganderbal. In fact the State troops appeared to have reduced the whole province of Kashmir to a state of siege and acts of wanton firing on unarmed citizens, desecration of mosques and harassment of men, women and children, were committed. Some of these allegations have been admitted, though indirectly, in the official communiques. These communiques themselves bear the impress of the man who is at the helm of affairs. One of them attempts to prove that the spontaneous 'hartal' observed by shopkeepers, tongawallas, shikaras and the like were, in fact, not spontaneous but "more out of fear of molesta-

tion". Another communique threatens action against mosques under the plea that these are used as fomenting grounds of "agitation against the State". There is already visible and bloody evidence on the walls of Srinagar's most famous mosque to show how the sanctity of places of worship has been honoured in the past."

The "Bombay Sentinel" on May 29, 1946, said:

"Pandit Nehru addressed a crowded meeting at Faridkot and gave friendly advice to the Princely Order. He assured the Princes that there was no intention to abolish them. What the States Peoples wanted was responsible government.

Pandit Nehru has repeatedly advised the Princes to march with the times. One would have thought that the Princes would make a note of the seriousness of the position, particularly in view of the recent declaration of Premier Attlee. But they have failed to take note of the writing on the wall.

Faridkot is not the only State which denies civil liberties and obstructs progress. There are other States including the Premier State of Hyderabad, which follow more or less similar policy. Kashmir has, however, suddenly come into prominence.

It is now more than a week since Kashmir has been subjected to a military raj. The recent wholesale arrests of many leaders released the floodgates of revolt against repression.

Referring to these happenings in Kashmir, Pandit Nehru stated that there was a deliberate attempt, reminiscent of the Martial Law days in the Punjab in 1919, to humiliate human beings. Srinagar, the capital, had now become the city of the dead owing to this criminal policy.

The official hand-outs on which the outside world depended were meagre, one-sided, inadequate, and gave no indication of popular discontents. For example, the latest official communique refers to "new tactics" being developed. These tactics consist, according to the communique,

in assembling in Khan Mulla and delivering objectionable speeches and shouting slogans.

The official communique also refers to the State's declared policy regarding worship and ends with a threat in case of continued abuse of this privilege.

According to Pandit Nehru, facts are otherwise. The mosques, including the inner shrines, were occupied by the military. A wall of the Jumma Masjid of Srinagar has been knocked down to allow passage to military lorries.

It is unfortunate these happenings lend themselves to communal twist by interested and mischievous elements. The authorities could certainly have avoided all this mischief and bloodshed by not arresting the leaders and handing over the Valley to military rule.

It is regrettable that there should be a marked difference in the policy of the All-India States Peoples' Conference as well as the Kashmir National Conference, without full and proper consideration.

Unfortunately, the hands of the State authorities were not altogether clean. The wholesale arrests of people, flagrant denial of civil liberties and repression did not certainly tend to improve matters.

It is difficult to imagine that any harm would have been done to the State, if peaceful assemblies were allowed and if people were permitted to shout harmless slogans. But that is exactly what the Kashmir administration prohibited.

It is a good augury, in this connection, that the ruler of Faridkot has seen the wisdom of withdrawing all restrictive orders. It should not follow States like Hyderabad, which are in a class by themselves.

It is difficult to see how Indian States can continue their repressive policy, with the tacit or open approval of the Political Department. The obligations of paramountcy with the help of British bayonets may be in operation for a limited or a short period. This obligation will cease the moment the British withdraw.

Pandit Nehru states that the British must "Quit India" most definitely. The Cabinet Mission is in India to see the smooth transference of power to Indian hands. About this, there is hardly any doubt.

The Cabinet Mission has warned the Princes that the British would not be able to discharge their obligations to the Princes when India becomes independent. The Mission also made clear that the British troops which were designed to carry out these obligations might not do so.

What do all these statements signify? After the British "Quit India" the States will have to settle matters with the Indian Union, whether they like it or not.

If the States intend settling with the Indian Union, they will have to turn their backs on the out-dated, medieval, autocratic rule to which they have been clinging so long and fast. They must initiate new policies by introducing responsible administrations in their States.

It will not be in their interest to make pious declarations of a new policy and practise old methods. The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes did this once and Pandit Nehru believes this is a "routine gesture."

Such methods will not pay. The States will have to march with the times and their policies will decide whether they deserve to survive or perish. There is no alternative."

The "Chronicler" in his last page on June 9, 1946, in the "Bombay Chronicle" weekly said:

"The Dogra Rajput, Gulab Singh of Jammu, treacherously behaved towards the Sikhs. The British chose him as one of their vile tools for carrying out their designs on the Sikh Raj. . . That treacherous Rajput chief, Raja Gulab Singh, had managed affairs so adroitly that the British marched on in the land of Sikhs quite unmolested and without being fired on by the enemy . . . Gulab Singh was rewarded for his treachery to the Sikhs with Kashmir . . ."

—'Rise of the Christian Power in India'—by B. D. Basu.

"Rulers of Indian States have always played the role

of traitors to the cause of Indian freedom. The (Quit Kashmir) movement demands complete withdrawal of British power and logically enough the stooges of British imperialism should go too and restore sovereignty to its real owners—the People. When we raise the slogan "Quit Kashmir" we naturally visualize that the princes and nawabs should quit all States. . . Russian revolution turned out the Czars and so did the French revolution. The voice has come—tear up the Treaty of Amritsar and quit Kashmir. . . Sovereignty is not the birthright of Maharaja Harisingh. 'Quit Kashmir.' It is not a question of revolt. It is a matter of right. Every child, man and woman will shout "Quit Kashmir". Kashmiri nation has expressed its will. I ask for a plebiscite on this question."

—SHEIKH ABDULLAH, before his arrest.

One day before the Tripartite Conference broke down, all the journalists present in Simla were invited to a cocktail party at one of the swanky hotels by the Principal Information Officer of the Chamber of Princes. We all, or most of us, went there—some to have free liquor at the expense of Their Highnesses, some out of curiosity to have a look at a couple of live Princes who were to be present, some out of sheer boredom because there was nothing else to do on that dull evening.

The cocktail bar was overcrowded and there was much talk and much pointless laughter and much cigarette smoke and much explosive popping of champagne bottles. American and British correspondents were taken to one side and introduced to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the Nawab of Bhopal, who had forgotten to wear his state jewels and so looked just like a human being without even that halo of divine right of kings which is supposed to decorate all princely heads. Meanwhile the third assistant of the Principal Information Officer of the Chamber of Princes carried on polite conversation with minor orangesquash-drinking journalists and, without much circumspection, asked them to be good enough to publish the communiques issued by the Information office of the Chamber of Princes to present the

"States' point-of-view" before the public. To which one of the correspondents who did not feel that the Princes had bought his soul with half a dozen glasses of champagne, retorted: "You are welcome to send us your communiques and I can promise you they will be used—against the interests of your master, the Princes"! Which was taken as a helluva joke in that sophisticated and slightly tipsy company—but wasn't!

I am glad I went to that cocktail party for, in retrospect, it seems to have been a historic occasion—the last flicker of the lamp of the Princely Order. History has recorded that on the eve of the French revolution, too "there was a royal fete at Versailles, there was dancing and singing before the King and the Queen, and toasts were drunk" in champagne, of course.....

History does repeat itself and what has been shall be. The story of France is being repeated in Kashmir, but it is only the events of long ago and far away that acquire the impressive aura of history. The revolutionary upsurge of our own people before our own eyes is often dismissed as a riot, a mutiny, a disturbance, an insurrection, a case of mob violence.....

It is not without significance that Kashmir should be the first state to raise the standard of open revolt, to issue 'Quit' orders to its ruler in the same decisive manner of the 'Quit India' resolution of August 8, 1942, to carry the implications of the democratic struggle of the Indian people for freedom to their logical conclusion. For, if it is hunger and oppression that bred revolution, Kashmir has been more than ripe for it for many years. This valley of joy, this heaven upon earth, is the home of the world's poorest and most downtrodden human beings, many of them exist on an economic level not much higher than that of animals.

Even the most casual tourist to Kashmir cannot remain oblivious to the misery of the Kashmiris. It is a grim irony, but perfectly symbolic of the system of feudal exploitation, that the inhabitants of this world-famed health resort should be stoop-shouldered, sore-eyed, sunken-cheeked; that the historically famous craftsmen who pro-

duce exquisite woollens should shiver in rags in the cold of a frost-bitten winter; that the manufacturers of luxurious carpets and beautifully carved wood-work shouldn't have a stick of furniture in their homes; that growers of millions of tons of luscious fruits should starve for a morsel of food.

Four times have I been to Kashmir, travelling from end to end of the state, trekking to the remotest interior far from the beaten track. And the more I have seen, and marvelled at, the beauties of its hills and its vallies, its gardens and its orchards, its lakes and its rivers, the more appalled have I been at the unspeakable poverty of its people, condemned to live in squalor and ignorance, while their ruler wastes millions in breeding horses for the Mahalaxmi race course, building palaces in Bombay and New Delhi, and spreading the fame of "Mr. A" in the gay capitals of Europe.

When as a school boy I went to Kashmir for the first time I was only vaguely disturbed by this glaring contrast between the beauty of nature and the ugliness of man.

When I went there again after some years I was indignant at the servile, cow-like patience with which the masses of Kashmir endured this life of horrors without protest. WHY DON'T THEY REVOLT? I kept asking myself.

On my third visit I sensed new life stirring under the earth, I heard the rumbles of protest. The middle class intelligentsia had awakened but, as it happens often with this class, their movement had assumed an unnecessarily communal character.

But when I went there last and attended a session of the Kashmir National Conference, and saw the procession of Kashmiri workers and peasants and craftsmen parading the streets of Srinagar and heard their slogans and heard their songs, and saw the gleam of hope in their eyes as they listened to their dynamic leader Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, I knew that Kashmir, at last, was awake and striding along the road to freedom. And when I read

the socialist, non-denominational programme popularized by the National Conference under the significant and inspiring title of NEW KASHMIR, I knew that here was a movement of the people, rising out of the basic economic needs and demands of the people, and that never again will it be side-tracked into futile communal channels.

Then I went for a trip into the interior, by foot and by horse, across frozen mountain passes and into forgotten, enchanted valleys. And wherever I went, in the huts of rice farmers on the slopes of the hills, and in water-mills by the side of gurgling streams, and around the camp-fires of the nomadic shepherds, I was amazed to hear the echoes of what I had heard Shaikh Abdullah speak in Srinagar. NEW KASHMIR—this two-worded mantra had roused a whole people and fired their imagination with the vision of a future without poverty and without exploitation, when this land of theirs would indeed become a heaven on earth. Nor was this achieved by a miracle. It was the result of Sheikh Abdullah having tramped through his land and met his people in their humble huts and tents and sat with them and talked to them in their own language about the things that were total to them. And even as he had left behind with them the impress of his personality, the spark of his vision and the echo of his voice, so had he taken with him a newer, firmer faith born out of the faith of his people.

And a vision came to me, a vision of this NEW KASHMIR—of smiling faces amidst the glowing saffron fields, of men and women who walked erect like the cypresses or the lofty deodars, of bright-eyed children laughing on their way to school, of craftsmen bent over their exquisite embroideries and carvings, of sturdy farmers working with a zest in their fields, of organized skilled workers in state-owned factories, of scientists harnessing the elements in the service of their people by damming the rivers and building hydro-electric plants and digging for minerals.....

But I knew that before this goal was reached, traditions of ignorance and servility of centuries would have to

be blasted, a new democratic, revolutionary spirit infused among the people. Revolution is a painful process and the birth-pangs are notoriously unpleasant. What is happening in Kashmir today—the arrest of the people's leaders, the police repression, the retaliatory violence of the people—is the agony of fruitful creation.

It may be true, as Pandit Jawaharlal has pointed out (somewhat spoiling the effect of his otherwise inspiring and hard-hitting statement on Kashmir), that it is not yet the policy of the State People's Conference to agitate for the removal of the princes. If it is not, it should be and I can quote umpteen passages from Panditji's own writings and speeches to prove the complete worthlessness of the Princely Order. At any rate, just as the Indian people could not be kept yoked to the goal of Dominion Status and constitutional methods of agitation, so will the States People refuse to be content with "constitutional monarchy" even of the British pattern. Why should they? Can anyone—even the Principal Information Officer of the Chamber of Princes—give me one sound reason for tolerating this costly anachronism of the Princely Order in this age when we are already moving forward from parliamentary democracy to socialism? The most they can expect is a comfortable pension to spend the remaining days of their lives in some pleasure resort of Europe, for that is where most of them have shown their preference to live!

The case of the people of Kashmir against their ruler is quite simple. They have unmistakably demonstrated their disgust with the present regime. Even then they are willing to re-affirm their verdict by a plebiscite. All talk of treaty and paramountcy and sovereignty is bunk. The quotation given at the head of this column shows the manner in which the ancestor of the present Maharaja came to secure the ownership of the four million Kashmiris and 85,000 square miles of their land. That is the historical background of the Treaty of Amritsar and any descendant of Gulab Singh with the least amount of sensibility would talk about it as little as possible.

The claim of Kashmiris for fullest autonomy and democracy is stronger than that of any single part of India, though the argument against autocratic monarchy applies with equal force to all the states, big and small.

Kashmir is a geographical unit. It is populated by people belonging to one race, speaking one language, having one common culture, and ninety-five per cent. of them follow the same religion. Yet they have had the good sense to organize their national movement on non-denominational and completely secular lines. They are politically awakened and conscious of their nationhood. Economically they can be self-sufficient, though I am quite certain that a free, democratic Kashmir would willingly remain within a united India.

Kashmir today has become a test for both Britain and India, for the people as well as the people. It has posed dramatically and forcefully the constitutional issue of the Indian States' relationship with a free India. It confounds the votaries of Pakistan and the Muslim Leaguers, for here is an almost wholly Muslim people raising the issue of their freedom, in alliance with the forces of united India, and unaffected by the concepts of Pakistan. But also it is a challenge to the freedom-fighters and upholders of democracy in our country. For it confronts us with the urgent, vital question: what is the shape and what are the boundaries of the Freedom that we have been demanding, that we have struggled for, and that we have almost won?

CHAPTER VII

STATES PEOPLES' CONFERENCE

Proceedings of the meeting of the General Council of the All-India States Peoples' Conference which met in New Delhi on June 8, 1946.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's opening address in the General Council of the All-India States Peoples' Conference.

"It has been one of the fundamental policies of the States people that in the constitution-making body their elected representatives must take part. They will not submit to their fate being decided by their Rulers or by the Rulers' nominees, we hold by that.

"The immediate problems before us are making of an Indian constitution, arrangements for the interim period, and democratisation of the States to bring them up to the common level with the rest of India.

"It is clear that when a Federal Union is established each unit will have equal rights. There will be no Paramountcy of one part over another. This presumes, of course, equal development and democracy in all the parts.

"There will be no Paramountcy as it exists today, or it may be said that Paramountcy for the whole of India will vest in the Federal Union Govt.

"It will be for the people of the States to decide about the future of the head of their staff. There is much talk about dynastic rights and the like. While we have accepted the continuance of the Ruler as a constitutional head, it must be made perfectly clear that the only ultimate rights we recognise are those of the people.

"Everything else must give way to them. Sovereignty must reside in the people and not in any individual.

"During the interim period, some kind of 'ad-hoc' arrangement will have to be made. Whatever this arrangement is going to be, the States people should not be left out of it. It is essential that there should be a united policy even during this interim period between the Provisional Government and the States, and that in the formation of this policy the States people should have a considerable voice.

"It is not possible even during this period to continue the present arrangements. Even if to some extent the old form prevails, the content of it must undergo a complete change. There has been nothing so reactionary in India as the Political Department. It must be possible to have a Joint Committee, representatives of the Provisional Government and the States, to consider all common problems and develop a unified policy.

In this Committee, the principle of the representation of the Indian States must be accepted. How this should be done is a matter for consideration.

"The difficulty as it faces us today is largely due to the autocratic character of the States Governments. If there had been democracy there, no difficulty would have arisen.

"Therefore, for this reason, as well as others, it is exceedingly important that urgent steps should be taken to introduce democratic and responsible Government in the States. As soon as the Government and the people are one, most problems vanish. That should be the immediate objective.

"In regard to many matters which normally come under Paramountcy, such as succession, maladministration etc., they may well be referred to a tribunal or to the Federal Court for decision.

"I have referred to Kashmir. Many alarming reports have come to us about recent events there. Some of them have been contradicted. I have been trying to find out the truth of what happened and if I find that I have been responsible for any wrong statement, I shall certainly correct it.

"In such matters, there is both exaggeration on the one side and an attempt to hide and distort what is happening, on the other. It is difficult to find the golden mean.

"Obviously, it is necessary even in the interest of the State administration to have an impartial enquiry into these events.

"But an enquiry is not enough when from day to day conflict takes place. Our colleague and comrade the Vice-President of the All-India States Peoples' Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is in prison with a large number of his co-workers, and it is stated that there are going to be trials.

"Obviously there will be no peace in Kashmir if trials and convictions of popular leaders continue. The British Government has repeatedly played that game and failed. The Kashmir Government is hardly likely to succeed. To Sheikh Abdulla and the people of Kashmir we send our greetings.

"One aspect of the Kashmir troubles demands our attention. That is the tendency, often encouraged by those in authority in all States to support faction or communalism. The policy of divide and rule has always been a favourite one of rulers all over the world.

"We must beware of that and we of the States People's Conference should specially avoid anything that savours of communalism. We stand for freedom of the people apart from any religion or creed, and equal rights for all.

"To give as examples two major States in India, we stand for exactly the same thing in Hyderabad and Kashmir, or in any other state, and that is the people's rule and sovereignty.

"Big things are going to happen in India, though what exactly they will be, I do not know, but it is clear that ultimately what will count is the strength of an organisation of the people.

"Therefore, we must concentrate on spreading and strengthening the All-India States People's Conference

which has already grown so rapidly. Let us make it not only the powerful voice of the people but also the weapon to reach their objective.

"I have not discussed deliberately what the immediate future may decide as to the acceptance and working out or the rejection of the proposals for a Constituent Assembly and a Provisional Government."

Speaking of the work of the British Cabinet Delegation during the last two months and a half, Pandit Nehru said the most astonishing part of "this long-drawn-out performance" had been the absence of the representatives of the States people from any of these deliberations.

"The States people," he said, "claim to speak for themselves and they will see to it that they are heard. No one else, and certainly not their rulers, can speak for them."

"It is true", he went on "that the elemental forces that are shaping India's destiny are much too powerful to be controlled or diverted by the Rulers or by any one else. Nevertheless it is odd that it should be argued that the Rulers by themselves should decide the fate of nearly a hundred million people."

Referring to Hyderabad, he said it was called the premier State of India but was also in many ways most feudal and backward.

"Along among the big States of India it has not yet even evolved any kind of elected or semi-elected Assembly. Alone also it has not yet removed the long existing ban on the State Congress.

"This backward State claims independence for itself when the British go. How long this fictitious independence can last is another matter. We remember a statement made by the Nizam about two years ago that he depended on the British for protection and, therefore, British overlordship should continue.

"It was a frank admission. Well, it is certain enough now that the British will quit India. What then of the protection and what of independence in the State?

"These are fantastic assertions unrelated to facts or reality. That reality is that none of the States can be independent or can go out of a Federal India.

"If that is so, as it is then everything that we do now must take us to that end of a Federal Union of India of autonomous units with a democratic structure of Government everywhere responsible to the people."

Concluding, Pandit Nehru said: "Many Rulers recognise, however, regrettfully, that this is inevitable. But they imagine that it will take a considerable time and that there will be many stages. But the march of events in India and the work does not permit of any tarrying during this journey. We have lingered already much too long and those who want to take things leisurely even now will be pushed by events."

Sardar Patel in his speech in the General Council of All-India States Peoples' Conference on June 8, 1946 said:

"Resolutions and mere talk will be of no avail. We should strengthen our organization. As a true servant of the States people, I realize your suffering and agony. We should not do anything to disturb the atmosphere at a time when important negotiations were going on. We have to form an All-India Centre and to come to a joint settlement with all the Rulers of Indian States. Movements in individual States will not help us much.

"There is a silent revolution going on in Indian States. Their rulers, at least an intelligent section among them, have realized that they will have to yield power to the people. Many of them are not accustomed to progress. They have had their greatest shock when they discovered that paramountcy was to end."

Continuing, Sardar Patel said: "I have taken interest in the States people's problems for the past many years. I have studied the conditions in which States people have been struggling against repressive regimes. We need more strength in the Indian States than in British India in fighting autocracy.

"There is double slavery in the States, for the rulers who are themselves slaves of the British oppress their subjects more. When Lord Birkenhead was the Secretary of State for India he announced that if the rulers wanted they could grant responsible Government to their subjects. At that time the people of Mysore started their movement. There was the usual repression, firing on the people, and the declaration of the Praja Mandal as an illegal body.

"Sir Mirza Ismail was then the Dewan. I showed him the Secretary of State's declaration. There was some sort of settlement, but it did not last. It was because the British Government did not like to arrive at a settlement in Indian States with the help of Congress leaders. They wanted that there should be settlement with the help of the Residents.

"Then, there was Rajkot. In Rajkot I got a settlement signed by the ruler. But as the Resident did not want a settlement, the ruler went back on his own signed agreement. Gandhiji had to go on fast. The then Viceroy intervened and appointed Sir Maurice Gwyer as arbitrator who gave his award in favour of the people. Even this award was not acted upon and the settlement was broken at the instance of the Political Department.

"Then a confidential circular was issued under which the rulers were advised not to meet Congress leaders. It was settled that no reforms should be introduced in any State without the sanction of the local Resident and the Political Department.

"At that time I came to the conclusion that it was no use fighting on two fronts. So long as the British power was helping the rulers there would be no settlement of the States people's problem. That is one of the reasons why we decided on the 'Quit India' movement."

Referring to the Cabinet Mission talks, Sardar Patel said: "We are keeping quiet so that nobody can blame the Congress that it did anything to disturb the atmosphere.

"Then there are troubles in individual States. I do not want to say anything about them. But personally I feel that the time has come when we can have a settlement with all the Rulers jointly instead of having individual struggles. We should not waste our energies in fighting with individual Rulers just at present. It will be better if there can be settlement all along the line between the two organisations. There is a favourable opportunity for it."

Referring to Kashmir State affairs, Sardar Patel said that the situation there was delicate. Sheikh Abdullah was in jail and there was a case pending against him. They did not know whether he had committed any mistake or not. They should not prejudge the issues involved without considering all the aspects of the matter. There were some points on which inquiries were necessary.

"Some of the important allegations made against the State were being contradicted. Neither did he want to say whether it was wise to raise the question of the Treaty of Amritsar. Interpreting it to mean that an effort was being made to remove the Ruler from his gadi, how far Sheikh Abdullah was right in doing this he could not say. But it was true that the Sheikh did not consult his own organization or his President before starting the 'Quit Kashmir' movement. At the present moment the best thing would be that a settlement should be brought about in Kashmir.

"If there was serious trouble in important individual States that would create difficulties. There were 400 or 500 Indian States and it was very difficult to secure individual settlement in each of them."

Appealing to Rulers to march forward, Sardar Patel said that there was a type of paralysis among them. Even in these enlightened times they were afraid to grant civil liberties. Those who were their advisers also did not want to yield power. They have been accustomed to act under the belief that the British power would last for ever. But now they must realize that it was to end. How

did it come about? "It is the power of the people that has made the British Government say that paramountcy will end. It is the Congress which has worked for the end of paramountcy. Our non-violent struggle has contributed to our success. It is wrong for the Rulers to think that with the end of paramountcy they will become free to do what they like. Their autocratic power will end with the end of paramountcy.

"The Rulers have to decide their future position. An intelligent section among them have come to know that they will have to grant freedom to their people, but a great many of them do not understand this as yet. We have to persuade them and make them realize that in peaceful transfer of power alone their safety lies."

Sardar Patel said that it was no use using violent methods against the Ruler. The people should realise their strength and then the Rulers would themselves approach them with the proposals for responsible Government.

"Up to now there has been quarrel among us and the Rulers. But freedom is now at hand. We should not think that even after freedom is achieved they will be as bad as before. Even they may have in them seeds of patriotism. When India becomes free seeds will blossom forth.

"The Rulers should realise that the status quo cannot be maintained. If they do not realise this they will bring about their own destruction. There are unfortunately some who do not realise this."

If the present negotiations fail, Sardar Patel said, the Congress will have to resume the 'Quit India' struggle.

Sardar Patel said that with the end of paramountcy all the so-called sacred treaties of the Rulers with the Crown will end. What would happen instead still remained to be decided. "We have to tackle this question peacefully. We should at present confine ourselves to the settling of the biggest problem facing us, namely, freedom for India. Problems in individual States were of lesser importance. The British Government for whatever reasons—maybe on account of the worsening international

situation, or the situation in Britain, and due to our own strength—have decided that paramountcy will end. That announcement was as important as the atom bomb.

"The second big item of the Cabinet Delegation's decision was that they had decided that there would be one Centre for India. No Indian State or province can keep out of it, and whoever wants to remain out will seek his own destruction. Free India will not be afraid of recalcitrant Rulers. A number of them, however, have realised that if the Congress wins freedom that will mean freedom for them also. But some of them have still a slavish mentality. They have been too long under the thumb of the Residents. They will understand the value of freedom when they are really free."

As regards selection of delegates for the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel said that the Congress representatives had told the Cabinet Mission that representatives from the Indian States should be the representatives of the people of the States and not nominated by the Rulers.

There were, however, some difficulties, in this regard. In a number of States there was no machinery for selecting people's representatives. Hence, the Princes had been asked to form a Negotiating Committee. The whole thing would be settled by negotiation.

Winding up Sardar Patel reiterated that they had no quarrel with the Rulers. They all wanted that a peaceful settlement should be reached, he said and added: "I do hope the Princes will respond to our earnest appeal to march on with the times."

The following resolution was adopted by the General Council of the All India States Peoples' Conference.

"The General Council have noted with great concern the recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir State involving the arrest of their Vice-President Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and many of his colleagues, repeated firings resulting in the deaths of numerous people and the use of the military all over the Valley for the suppression

of the people's movement. Reports have reached the Council through the public press and otherwise of many acts committed by the military against the civil population which are of a degrading and inhuman nature. Some of these reports are well authenticated. At the same time the State authorities have denied most of them. In view of this assertion and denial it is patently desirable, both in the interest of the people and of the State authorities, that a full public and impartial inquiry should be instituted into these occurrences.

"While an inquiry is necessary, the fact of immediate significance is that conflict and turmoil and repression are continuing in Kashmir State. It is unfortunate that at a time when the whole future of India including the Indian States is being discussed and the States may undergo a rapid and far-reaching changes in the near future, such conflict and repression which have led and must continue to lead to exceeding bitterness, should continue. Yet it is inevitable that if the leaders of the popular movement are confined in prison and proceeded against in the courts of law, there can be no peace or the dispassionate consideration of the basic issues that confront the State and the country today.

"The present conflict was precipitated by the arrests of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his colleagues while he was on his way to Delhi to consult the President of the Conference in regard to future policy. Sheikh Sahab, some days before his departure had declared a cessation of public meetings in view of his impending visit to Delhi for consultation. His arrest, therefore, was peculiarly ill-timed and provocative. The Prime Minister of Kashmir, according to his own statement, had long prepared for an offensive against the popular movement and this arrest was apparently the beginning of this offensive. Such an offensive against a mass movement representing the urges of the people necessarily leads to mass upheaval in defence of the people's rights.

"The General Council have noted that the present phase of the movement in Kashmir began with an attack

on the Amritsar Treaty of 1846 which was criticised in a telegraphic message to the Cabinet Delegation. The Council are of opinion that the Amritsar Treaty and all other treaties between the old East India Company or the British Government and the ancestors of the present Rulers of the States have no longer any validity, are completely out of date, and were often made in circumstances which do not bring credit to the parties concerned. In any event they cannot be held binding on the people and cannot prevent their march to freedom. The Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy have in their Statement of May 16th stated that Paramountcy will end when the new Constitution for India has been prepared by the Constituent Assembly. The end of Paramountcy inevitably means the end of the old treaties. Thus the question of the Amritsar Treaty as of other treaties is no longer a question of any importance.

"In accordance with the policy of the All India States Peoples' Conference as well as of the Kashmir National Conference the objective aimed at in the States is full responsible government under the aegis of the Ruler. So long as this is not altered formally and constitutionally, it remains. A demand for the abrogation of the old treaties does not involve a departure from this policy. The States Peoples' Conference has for many years past demanded the abrogation of these virtually unilateral treaties which in fact have fallen into desuetude and have no force now. Responsible government means that sovereignty rests with the people and it is for the people to decide later as to what forms of government they should have.

"The General Council think that in the present circumstances no occasion has arisen for any deviation from this policy. They are of opinion, therefore, that States Peoples' organisations should continue to adhere to that objective and leave the future of the State to be decided by the people through the responsible governments that must necessarily come into being.

"The General Council have noted with deep regret the attempt being made in various quarters to raise com-

munal issues in Kashmir at this critical moment. Any such attempt is obviously injurious to the cause of the people as a whole and more especially to the cause of minorities. The States Peoples' Conference and its affiliated bodies stand for the achievement of freedom by all the people of the States and the establishment of fundamental rights for every one regardless of creed or religion. Any person who brings in communalism in a popular movement and a popular struggle does injury to the people's cause.

"In Kashmir, as in other States in India, there can be no solution of the problems that face them without the achievement of freedom and full responsible government. This fundamental fact must be recognised by all concerned. In order to consider for changes that should be brought about forthwith for this purpose, it is necessary that the present conflict in Kashmir should be ended and a normal situation restored. The General Council trust that the State authorities will put an end to the policy of repression which they are carrying on and which can only lead to disastrous consequences. The Council would appeal to the people of Kashmir also, at the same time, to help in creating a peaceful atmosphere for the consideration of the grave problems that face them. In this work this Council offer their wholehearted co-operation.

"Between the people of Kashmir and the people of the other States there is the solidarity of common interest and common objective and it will be their privilege to share common perils. It is the duty of the States Peoples' Conference to help in every way possible the people's movement in Kashmir. The President is authorised to take such steps as he may consider necessary to deal with the situation created in Kashmir.

The Council send their greeting to their Vice-President Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues in prison and assure him that they will stand by them in the cause of freedom. They pay their homage to those who have sacrificed their lives in this great cause.

Pandit Nehru's statement on June 12, 1946, on Kashmir with a view to clarify certain press reports and his previous statements.

"I have refrained from saying much about the Kashmir situation since I issued my last statement. The matter is much too serious and grave for an argument to be carried on in the Press. It was my desire not to say anything which might worsen the situation. My mind and thoughts, however, have been occupied with this situation and I have tried to think of what should be done to improve it. I waited for the meeting of the General Council of the States Peoples' Conference and I also gathered as much information about the events there as I could. The General Council have passed a comprehensive resolution which I commend to the public. That resolution was carefully drafted and represents our joint opinion on this subject.

"I find that my concluding remarks at the General Council meeting have not been correctly reported or understood. This is an additional reason why I should make myself clear in regard to Kashmir.

"The Kashmir authorities denied almost totally many of the statements of events that I had made previously. I have now considered carefully a large number of reports coming in the Press as well as from individuals and eye-witnesses in Kashmir. I have also met deputations, some officially inspired and representing the official viewpoint, others representing another viewpoint. Entirely contradictory reports have been made to me as to the facts that happened. Obviously a searching inquiry is necessary in order to reach the truth. For my part I believe that during the first days following the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah the military behaved in a very bad manner and many of the allegations made against them are true or have a strong basis of fact. Later much of this was stopped by the Government. It is clear that one cannot hold the Government directly responsible for every act of the soldiery. What the Government is directly responsible for is the use of the military on this scale, and

when this is done other consequences normally follow. Two incidents I mentioned I should like to correct. I have no present information which can substantiate them and I regret that I gave publicity to these two incidents without sufficient proof. These two allegations are the burning of bodies of persons killed and the breaking down of a compound wall of the Jumma Masjid. Very probably the deaths due to firing were much greater than those admitted in the official communique. How all these bodies were disposed of I cannot say without much greater proof than I possess. As regards the allegation about the wall of the Jumma Masjid, it appears that there is a wooden gate and a military lorry passing through accidentally dislodged some bricks of a column. This may have given rise to the story. Anyhow I am sorry that I stated something which was not correct.

"These are relatively minor matters. The major thing is the nature of the action taken by the Kashmir Government from the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah onwards. I have no doubt that the arrest was wholly uncalled for and unwise and the subsequent action taken through the military was extraordinarily provocative. It has amazed me how any one placed in a responsible position can make the statement made by the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Those statements threw more light on the background of the situation than anything else that I know. He has charged me with being a partisan. He is perfectly right in doing so, for I am a partisan of the people of Kashmir and I intend to stand by them whatever the future may unfold. The question is on whose side is the Government of Kashmir, on the people's side or against it. Recent events would indicate that it considered the people of Kashmir as an enemy people. If a Government functions in this way it forfeits all confidence and lays the seeds of trouble.

"I do not wish to enter into any argument because it is my earnest desire to help in solving this complex situation. Obviously this is important not only from the point of view of Kashmir, but of all the States as well as the whole of India. Events today act and react on each

other. The people of the States everywhere are closely watching with the deepest sympathy what is happening in Kashmir. As our resolution has shown, we must and will stand by the people there, and yet we would much prefer an ending of this present trouble and we want to help in it. If unfortunately the authorities continue in their course of repressive action, the natural consequence will be for the people to oppose them and resist this action.

"I find that all manner of stories are prevalent of Communist action in Kashmir and the example of Azerbaijan is cited. A few Communists have undoubtedly functioned in Kashmir, but it is absurd to think that this movement is due to them. It is still more absurd to bring in Azerbaijan. So far as I am concerned, I do not hold with many aspects of Communist policy in India and it is for this reason that in the National Congress we have parted with them. I should imagine that the policy of the Kashmir Government is more likely to encourage Communist activity than any other policy. The fact is that Kashmir, which is not only beautiful but wealthy in the real sense of the term with enormous resources, potential power, and some of the finest artisans and craftsmen in the world, is a country of appalling poverty. The fact is that nothing happens in Kashmir to redeem this poverty and raise the level of the masses. Out of this degradation and suffering a powerful people's movement has grown. This movement is essentially national in its outlook though sometimes communal elements have played a part in it. It is not anti-Hindu, anti-Sikh or anti-anything. The only way to deal with this movement is with friendship and co-operation and with active steps to relieve the burden of poverty. It cannot be suppressed.

"I have unfortunately been tied up here with important consultations and have been unable to go to Kashmir, But Kashmir fills my mind and I shall go there as soon as I can. To the Government of Kashmir I would say that you have erred grievously in many things, but there is yet time to remedy at least some of the errors. It is never wrong for a Government to retrace a step which has

brought trouble in its train. To persist in error is not strength. To the people of Kashmir I would, first of all, extend my deepest sympathy for all they have suffered and are at present suffering and my assurance that I shall do my utmost for their peace and advancement. To the minorities there I should like to say that their future must inevitably lie in co-operation with the majority. They do a disservice to themselves and Kashmir by isolating themselves. They have every right to live the life of their choice within the structure of freedom which Kashmir must necessarily evolve. They have every reason to stand by their legitimate rights. But it is not a legitimate right to come in the way of the advance of the people as a whole or to claim special privileges which are at the expense of others. So far as I can see, these minorities will have an honourable position in Kashmir, but that position will never be gained by hostility to others and the propagation of communal hatred.

"Let everyone in Kashmir look at the problem in relation to what is happening in India and the world. That is the only true perspective. Governments come and go, but the people remain. It is the people who should count in the end and who make and unmake Governments. Therefore, it is only from the people's point of view that any real solution can be sought.

"Sheikh Abdullah is at present in prison with many of his colleagues. That fact alone is a continuous provocation to many. If that provocation was removed, I am sure peace would come soon enough. For my part, I am not in the habit of giving up a cause I have espoused or a comrade when he is in trouble. I shall stand by the cause of the people of Kashmir and of Sheikh Abdullah, who is their acknowledged leader, and I shall do everything to advance that cause. That means no hostility to any other group, rather it means the good of all who are connected with Kashmir."

CHAPTER VIII

PANDIT NEHRU LEAVES FOR KASHMIR

Text of Nehru-Kashmir Ruler correspondence before Pandit Nehru's departure for Kashmir.

Telegram, dated May 28, 1946 from Pandit Nehru from New Delhi to the Prime Minister of Kashmir.

"Press reports indicate the trial of Sheikh Abdullah and others. I desire to organise his proper defence. I request full facilities and time for this."

Telegram, dated May 29, from the Prime Minister to Pandit Nehru:—

"Your telegram of May 29. The case before the Court, which will doubtless grant facilities for defence permissible under the law on application from the accused."

Telegram, dated June 14, from Pandit Nehru to the Maharaja:—

"I am reaching Srinagar on June 19 with lawyers for Sheikh Abdullah's trial. I hope that in the interests of all concerned, the trials will be given up and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues released. Such a step will lead to a peaceful consideration of the grave problems confronting Kashmir. I would gladly help in this task and can meet you for this purpose if you so desire."

Telegram, dated June 16 from the Maharaja to Pandit Nehru:—

"Your telegram dated June 14. The cases are sub-judice. Under the rules any outside lawyers whom the accused may engage will have to approach the Chief Justice for permission to appear. Your coming here is inadvisable as it will only create complications."

Telegram, dated June 17, from Pandit Nehru to the Maharaja:—

"Received your telegram. I am surprised to learn that you consider my visit will lead to complications. I am going to Kashmir to help in putting an end to complications already existing and easing the unfortunate situation which has already lasted too long. As such State authorities should welcome my visit and give all facilities. Isolation and avoidance of personal contacts lead to unnecessary difficulties. Hence my desire to study the situation for myself and to meet you. I have sent a letter to you by a messenger."

Telegram, dated June 18, from the Maharaja to Pandit Nehru:—

"Your telegram dated June 17. I note that you are sending a letter by messenger. My views regarding your coming remain unchanged as I feel certain that at this juncture it will entail unfortunate consequences, which it is the duty of all concerned to avert."

Letter dated June 16, from Pandit Nehru to the Maharaja:—

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

"Day before yesterday I sent you a telegram to the following effect: 'Am reaching Srinagar on June 19 with lawyers for Sheikh Abdullah's trial. I still hope that in the interests of all concerned the trial will be given up and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues released. Such a step will lead to a peaceful consideration of the grave problems confronting Kashmir. I would gladly help in this task and can meet you for this purpose if you so desire.' I hope to reach Srinagar together with Mr. Asaf Ali, Dewan Chamanlal and Mr. Baldev Sahai, ex-Advocate-General of Bihar, on the evening of June 19 by car from Rawalpindi. The immediate object of our coming there is to arrange for Sheikh Mohd. Abudullah's defence in the trial that has been fixed for June 21.

"I am much more concerned, however, as I have no doubt you are also with the general situation in Kashmir of which this trial is only a part. I should very much like

to be of some help in the solution of the problems that have arisen there. My main object in coming is to endeavour to do so. I want, as you must also desire, peace and development in Kashmir State. I feel, however, that it will not be possible to return to normalcy and peace unless these trials are withdrawn and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues are released.

"Naturally the present agitation that is still continuing in some form or other in Kashmir, should also be stopped at the same time. This action will result in a proper and peaceful consideration of the various problems which, those interested in Kashmir, have to face, I have, therefore, requested you in my telegram and I would like to repeat the request here that Sheikh Abdullah and others be released. As you are no doubt aware Sheikh Abdullah was on his way to consult me here in Delhi, when he was arrested. As soon as he is released, we can confer together and endeavour to devise means, which would lead to a proper settlement.

"The problem of Kashmir is important enough by itself and some of us are intensely interested in it. In view of the present movement, however, it has an additional importance in the whole context of Indian States. The Constituent Assembly is likely to come into being soon and each State and more especially the major States will have to consider their representation in this Assembly.

"You are, I presume, aware of the popular demand put forward both by the Indian National Congress and the All-India States Peoples' Conference that representation in the Constituent Assembly should be by means of representatives elected by the people. All these and similar problems have to be faced very soon. It is obvious that the difficulty inherent in these problems will be greatly increased if the situation in Kashmir is abnormal and the State is in conflict with the popular organisation there. Therefore, in the interest of the State authorities as well as the people rapid return to normalcy is eminently desirable.

"It is very difficult for me at this delicate stage of negotiations with the British Cabinet Delegation to leave Delhi even for a day. But I am so greatly interested in doing something for Kashmir that I have decided to leave Delhi and to try my best to help in finding a solution. The solution would be easy enough if you and your Government also desire it. I have suggested in my telegram that I would gladly meet you to discuss these matters if you so desire. My visit to Srinagar on this occasion will necessarily be brief as I have to come back as soon as possible to Delhi for talks with the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy. But even during this visit it may be possible to lay the foundations of a settlement. If necessary I can return to Srinagar a little later for further conversations.

"I am asking my colleague, Mr. Dwarkanath Kachru, to take this letter so that you may get it before my arrival in Srinagar and be acquainted more fully with my approach to this problem. I hope that my impending brief visit to Kashmir will yield results, which are satisfactory to all parties concerned."

In reply to questions put to Pandit Nehru at Lahore aerodrome he said:

"I am going to Kashmir to arrange for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah, secondly, to see things for myself, although my visit to Srinagar will be a brief one; and thirdly, to do all I can to put an end to the complications arising from the policy of the Kashmir Government."

Pandit Nehru said there could be no peace in Kashmir unless Sheikh Abdullah was released.

Pandit Nehru's entry into Kashmir State banned.

The order under the Jammu and Kashmir State Defence Rules banning Pandit Nehru's entry into the State said:—

"There are reasons to believe that Pandit Nehru is about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety and order.

"I, M. C. Dar, District Magistrate, Kashmir, with a view to prevent the said Pandit Nehru from acting in that manner think it is necessary that the following order be served on him:

"Now, therefore, in the exercise of the powers conferred on me by Rule 24 of the J. and K. Defence Rule 91 and Council Order 281X of 1942, I, M. C. Dar, District Magistrate, Kashmir, hereby direct that the said Pandit Nehru of Allahabad shall remove himself from the Kashmir province immediately via the Kohala route and shall not return to the Kasmir province without my previous permission in writing."

Account of Pandit Nehru's arrest.

SRINAGAR, June 20

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested at 9-30 this morning at Domel following his defiance of the State ban on his entry into Kashmir. No further information is at present available.

Rai Bahadur Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State, told the 'Associated Press' special correspondent at 10 this morning: "I think by now Pandit Nehru might have been arrested."

After getting confirmation of Nehru's arrest, the correspondent asked where Pandit Nehru would be taken, the Prime Minister replied: 'Don't ask me this question at present, I will tell you later.'

According to an earlier message, the Dak Bungalow where Pandit Nehru is staying is surrounded on all sides by the State military forces.

Dr. Dwarkanath Kachru, General Secretary of the Indian States Peoples' Conference, was arrested under orders of the District Magistrate of Kashmir and taken to Domel under a police escort. The arrest was effected at Kohala yesterday when Pandit Nehru and party were breaking through the military cordon.

Mr. Asaf Ali's statement on Pandit Nehru's arrest from Srinagar on June 22, 1946.

Mr. Asaf Ali said that Pandit Nehru stated on Thursday in the course of a letter to the District Magistrate of Srinagar, after he had been informed that he would not be allowed to proceed beyond Kohala: "I am proceeding to Srinagar with a view to advising my colleagues in regard to the conduct of Sheikh Abdullah's case. I have come to help the defence of Sheikh Abdullah's case and I do not purpose to go back without going to Srinagar."

"This latter sentence was said by way of criticising the order that was served on him at Kohala calling upon him to remove himself from Kashmir territory because his activity was regarded by the authorities to be prejudicial to the safety of law and order in the State. Pandit Nehru has said in his letter that he considers this order wholly unjustifiable and it is obvious that the purpose of his visit was no other than the one stated above. The order of externment was wholly unwarranted."

"It is quite possible," added Mr. Asaf Ali, "that the authorities of Srinagar relying as they must have been on information received through their own sources, go the wrong angle from which they looked on Pandit Nehru's visit, but after receipt of his letter the wrong should be rectified without further ado and, in my opinion, it should be rectified as quickly as possible."

"As a matter of fact, he was to have flown back to Delhi yesterday if he had only been able to reach Srinagar for an interview with Sheikh Abdullah and the defence counsel and I have no doubt that he would also have liked to seek an interview with His Highness in connection with the general situation in Kashmir. Under the circumstances, I cannot help feeling that the action taken against him was even in the larger interest of the State, not a very wise one.

"Any one can see that if the President-elect of the Congress is held as a detenu in a State under these circumstances, the resentment throughout the country would

be both tense and widespread. If only the authorities had taken that fact into consideration, they would not have taken the action which they did, because they need India's sympathy rather than resentment at this stage."

What would happen if the State authorities took Pandit Nehru to a place outside the State and left him there, Mr. Asaf Ali was asked.

He replied: "Knowing Pandit Nehru as I do, I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that if he is convinced that his movements are being unjustly restricted, he will be the last person to allow such things to stand in his way, with the result that wherever he may be taken, he will return to the State and it would create a very serious situation.

"I need not dilate on further consequences. The best course, in my opinion, is to terminate this state of affairs as speedily as possible and the perfect and the correct way out is that the State authorities should withdraw the order of externment and thereby ease the entire situation.

"Having regard to the fact that he has very important and urgent work to do, it is obvious that he will not be sitting on Srinagar for more than a few hours. I am perfectly certain that it will be the best thing for all concerned."

Asked what would happen if the State continued to detain him, Mr. Asaf Ali said, "It is an unsupportable position, that he will be interned indefinitely. So long as he remains in custody, spontaneous indignation in India will continue to spread from corner to corner and that is hardly a development to be desired by the State authorities in Kashmir. They should take immediate action to reverse their decision and thus avoid incalculably serious consequences arising out of Pandit Nehru's arrest."

A vivid description of the incident at Kohala in which Pandit Nehru and Dewan Chamanlal were injured was given by Dewan Chamanlal.

Dewan Chamanlal said that at Kohala when Pandit Nehru's patience had been exhausted by waiting for the

Maharaja's permission to proceed to Srinagar, Pandit Nehru started marching towards Domel, accompanied by his colleagues. The way was barred by policemen holding lathis parallel to the ground, shoulder high. The police pushed Panditji and the crowd back. In the second row, behind the lathi police were soldiers with rifles.

Panditji received a knock with a lathi on his cheek. All this happened at about 7-30 p.m.

Dewan Chamanlal referred to the Kashmir Government's right cheek below the eye. Continuing, he said that a military officer then ordered the soldiers to load their rifles. "The soldiers did so. I went up to the soldiers and told them to fire, if they dared to do so. Thereafter, Panditji proceeded onward. He sat on the roof of his car which had come up and he drove towards Domel."

Dewan Chamanlal's statement on Pandit Nehru's arrest from Srinagar on June 22, 1946.

Dewan Chamanlal, in an interview today said: "The hand of conciliation put out by Pandit Nehru should be grasped by the Kashmir authorities at all costs. It is not too late even now to set the wrong right and to proceed to welcome Pandit Nehru to Srinagar for a few hours which he can spare from the bigger task awaiting him. I have myself suggested this course to the Maharaja."

Dewan Chamanlal referred to the Kashmir Government's press report regarding Pandit Nehru's declared objectives in going to Kashmir and said: "No useful purpose can be served by not making public real reasons for Pandit Nehru's visit to Srinagar and by not emphasising these very important reasons. In Pandit Nehru's telegram to His Highness he had stated that he was reaching on the 19th with lawyers for Sheikh Abdullah's trial. He hoped that in the interests of all concerned the trial would be given up and that Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues released.

He added that such a step would lead to a peaceful consideration of the grave problems confronting Kashmir. He offered gladly to help in this task and to meet

the Maharaja for this purpose if he so desired. Nothing could have been more considerate and reasonable than the offer made by Pandit Nehru. The Maharaja replied stating that Pandit Nehru's coming to Kashmir was inadvisable as it would only create complications. He did not apparently realise how necessary it was for the purpose of avoiding complications that Panditji should pay a short visit of a few hours that he had planned to Srinagar.

"Pandit Nehru in another telegram to the Maharaja stated that he was going to Kashmir to help in putting an end to the complications already existing and easing the unfortunate situation which had lasted too long. The State authorities, he stated, should welcome this visit and give all facilities. He further added that isolation and avoidance of personal contact leads to unnecessary difficulties. Hence Nehru's desire to study the situation for himself and his offer to meet the Maharaja.

"It is most unfortunate that instead of welcoming this most generous offer made in a spirit of conciliation amply evidenced in the telegram sent by Pandit Nehru to the Maharaja, the authorities themselves have created a further serious complication by taking action against Pandit Nehru and prevented him from reaching Srinagar. It must be remembered that Nehru is the President of the All-India States Peoples' Conference and a very heavy responsibility rests upon his shoulders which he was discharging in a spirit of statesmanship and a minute's thought would have convinced people who are not so isolated as some of the administrators in Kashmir that the hand of conciliation put out by Pandit Nehru should be grasped at all costs."—"Hindustan Times", 24-6-46.

CHAPTER IX

KASHMIR GOVERNMENT CRITICISED

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President's statement on Pandit Nehru's arrest by Kashmir Government:

"The manner in which the Kashmir Government has denied to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru entry into the State has caused indignation all over India. I have received numerous messages, telegrams and telephone calls from individuals and organizations in Kashmir, Punjab and elsewhere expressing their resentment and declaring their readiness to proceed to Kashmir to defy the order of the State authorities. I appreciate the spirit of these offers, but at the same time request them to await further instructions.

"It is well known that Pandit Nehru was going to Kashmir only for a day to see things for himself, to meet Sheikh Abdullah and arrange for his defence. The provocation by the action of the State authorities is undoubtedly great and the Maharaja of Kashmir and his advisers have committed a grievous blunder in acting in the way they have done. We should, however, act with deliberation, however great the provocation may be.

"I am trying to establish contact with Pandit Nehru and hope that an amicable solution may yet be found. If this does not happen far-reaching and serious repercussions are inevitable."

The "Hindusthan Standard" on June 22, 1946 said:

"Those little Fuehrers of Kashmir dressed in little brief authority, drunk with the lust for power have run amuck. They have capped their tale of miserable misdeeds with an insane outrage on the person of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, followed by the arrest of the nation's beloved leader.

The bayonet wound inflicted on the person of Pandit Nehru by armed bullies in the pay of the Raj in Kashmir will heal in time and let us hope and pray that it heals soon. But innocent blood was drawn again, just as last month the blood of innocent Kashmiris had streaked with patches of red the pink lotuses in Srinagar's Dal Lake. The assault on Pandit Nehru and his subsequent arrest mark the limit. It will go down in history as the blackest deed in the black record of autocratic rule in Princely India. The wound will heal; but the scar will remain. It will shine on the face of Nehru as despotism's last gift to the relentless fighter for the cause of people's freedom. Let the cowardly braves who run the administration of Kashmir realise until it is too late what it means. Amends shall have to be made and rich amends too for this insane act of folly.

It was some cheek on the part of the Kashmir Raj to ban the entry of Nehru into Kashmir. Was Nehru engaged in a plot to overthrow the Government of Kashmir? Why were the little lords in Srinagar scared to death at the very thought of Pandit Nehru's visit to Kashmir. If things were, as they claimed, perfectly normal in Kashmir, if last month's tale of atrocities and the report of ruthless rule by violence prevailing now had no foundation in fact, the Kashmir despots could have then nothing to conceal, nothing to fear from Nehru's presence on the spot.

Pandit Nehru had given ample notice to the Kashmir Government announcing his intention to visit the State. He had addressed an appeal also to the Kashmir people asking them to call off the movement for the present. The Kashmir bureaucrats however preferred to be tough. They wanted to be as tough as the toughest of the Bourbons. They answered every friendly gesture from Nehru with insolence. First the Kashmir Prime Minister Rai Bahadur Ram Chandra Kak announced that Pandit Nehru would be unwelcome in Kashmir. As though that could not have been enough, the Kashmir Government officially announced next that no aircraft would be allowed to land within the Kashmir State without the permission of the Kashmir military. This was meant to be a broad hint to Pandit

Nehru, as if a Nehru who had braved so often the Delhi masters—the real masters of the Srinagar autocrats, would care to take orders from the little Fuehrers of Kashmir! The hint was lost and next came the Maharaja's message echoing his Premier's voice, which also could not desist Pandit Nehru from his resolve to reach Kashmir, not for provoking a rebellion, but for seeing the situation in Kashmir. The climax was reached when the order banning Panditji's entry was served and defied, and the uniformed hooligans of the State assaulted Pandit Nehru and Dewan Chamanlal. The subsequent arrest of Pandit Nehru was the last act of folly that merely added insult to injury.

We have recounted above the whole atrocious episode at some length just to show that the series of incidents culminating in the assault and arrest were not careless and unpremeditated acts of indiscretion. The whole affair seems to have been well-planned in advance, just as carefully planned as last month's plot to crush and drown in blood the people's movement in Kashmir.

But why, again we shall ask this question to the Kashmir bureaucrats, did they take into their heads, if heads they have at all, that Pandit Nehru's visit to Kashmir would spell ruin for the Raj in Kashmir? Nehru and the States People's Conference have made it clear, not once but on scores of occasions, that all they want is full self-government for the people. They demand it not for Kashmir only; for all the five hundred and odd Princely prisons where people groan under conditions of semi-slavery, the demand is the same. It is the same in Bhopal and Hyderabad as in Kashmir. The people's will must prevail.

The Kashmir despots must be living in a fool's paradise, if they think that people's attention will be diverted and the real issue obscured by starting the scare of a synthetic Soviet-cum-Muslim plot to incite the people to a rebellion. Pandit Nehru has pulled to pieces this piece of brazen-faced falsehood. Kashmir, like other Princely preserves of privilege, is not such a Garden of Eden that it would require a Devil in Soviet guise to tempt the Kash-

miris to a rebellion. A State that spends only one quarter million for nation-building activities and four times the amount on a handful of pampered darlings does not require any outside influence to blow up a powder-keg the tyrants themselves have packed full with explosive material.

The Kashmir rulers have had ample warnings. There were rumblings of popular discontent in the twenties. In the thirties autocracy got a good shaking in Kashmir, when the Civil Disobedience Movement carried on its wings the States People's struggle for freedom. And now when India is in the last lap of her struggle for freedom, how can the five hundred and odd autocrats sprinkled all over the country expect that their tiny islets of reaction will be able to withhold drastic changes to give back the people their long-denied dues? Gun or guile will not be able to withhold. Those flimsy falsehoods spread for slandering the States people's movement as being engineered from outside will carry conviction nowhere.

Kashmir is only a pointer. It has brought into sharp focus the misery of the States people and the misdeeds of their rulers. The assault on Pandit Nehru and his arrest are sure to cause nation-wide resentment against the rulers of Princely India.

Woe unto them, if this is the manner they intend to exercise their rights of Paramountcy in a new India! There is time left yet for the Princes to make amends; to surrender power to the people and to agree to rule as constitutional heads only. Pandit Nehru has been urging for this and now, look at how he has been rewarded by the power-drunk despots of Kashmir. "Caesar, Beware of the Ides of March." warned the Soothsayer. Caesar did not heed and he paid the highest penalty. Will the Maharaja of Kashmir and the rulers of five hundred and odd States in India take heed? Take heed now! Or it may be too late. To the Kashmir autocrats we address the same warning as Pandit Nehru gave on the fateful day of his journey to Kashmir. "There can be no peace in Kashmir," unless full amends are made for all that the despots in Kashmir have done."

"The Bombay Chronicle" on June 23, 1946 said:—

The storm of indignation that swept over the whole of India at the arrest of Pandit Nehru by the Kashmir Darbar shows what is has to reckon with if it persists in its folly in banning his entry into the State. Here is a foremost Indian leader, President-elect of the Indian National Congress and President of the All-India States People's Conference, at whose bidding millions of Indians would be up and doing. Such an eminent leader wished to go to Srinagar on an absolutely peaceful mission, namely, to help in the legal defence of Sheikh Abdullah and an amicable settlement of the various questions agitating the minds of the State's people. This point he made clear as crystal in his correspondence, now published, with the Maharaja and his Prime Minister. In the circumstances the Durbar ought to have welcomed the visit and availed itself of the help offered. If it did not need his help for itself it ought to have allowed the people of the State to welcome him and his help to them. It was discourteous, if not impertinent, to object to him as an outsider. It was particularly unwise to do so at a time when the representatives of the States and of the people of India are negotiating for a settlement for the whole of India. The people of the State ought to have been allowed to choose their leader and consult him. It was positively foolish for the authorities to have served him with an order at Kohala calling upon him to remove himself from Kashmir territory on the plea that his activity was prejudicial to the safety of law and order in the State. The fear was utterly baseless. All classes of people would have welcomed him and those on the border of the State had already done so. As for the demonstration by a few persons who carried black flags, Pandit Nehru himself tells us how they soon realised their error and apologised to him saying that they had been paid for the occasion. His arrest was a reprehensible blunder. Were it not for the fact that the leaders of India were intensely pre-occupied with other and graver problems and needed his attendance at Delhi, the arrest would have led to a serious crisis in Kashmir.

Pandit Nehru's return to Delhi in response to the Congress President's direction to him to attend an urgent meeting of the Working Committee and the adjournment of Sheikh Abdullah's trial have somewhat eased the situation. But when the trial is resumed and the other unsolved problems of Kashmir demand his presence Pandit Nehru will not hesitate to revisit the State. In the first place he rightly regards the whole of India as his home and claims the right to go to any part of it. And he will not allow anything to deter him from what he regards as his duty to the people of Kashmir and their leader, Sheikh Abdullah. It is to be hoped that, if he should find it necessary to revisit Kashmir, the State authorities will be more sensible and not repeat their past blunders. The people of the State and of India as a whole will not tolerate them. The honour of the President-elect of the Congress will be vindicated by the country. Meanwhile, Pandit Nehru himself observes: "I am not sorry for what has happened if it makes the rulers and others think hard of the new conditions of India and the temper of her people." And he aptly describes the changed conditions in the States when he says: "It is not merely a question of treaty rights, which are dead as a door nail or dynastic rights, which had no value in people's eyes, but a question of human right. It is by that standard that all problems have to be considered and decided." It will be well for the Princes themselves if they realise the revolutionary changes that have come to stay in the country."

The "The National Herald" on June 22, 1946 said:—

"Jawaharlal Nehru has invaded Kashmir territory, scorned the ban order imposed by puny, if finicky, authority and breached the Bastille against a mighty array of bayonets. He has been arrested and the state authorities are prisoners of their own puerile impudence. What will they do with him? Will they prosecute him or keep him in indefinite detention? Millions will march into the state at a word of command, break down the Bastille completely and sweep away Kak and his contumacious satellites and the high-sounding Jammu and Kashmir Defence Rules.

The state Government had at first neither the political courage to arrest Nehru nor the moral courage to pocket the order with a contrite conscience. But Premier Kak has his bayonets and he knows that Nehru has not gone there with violence in his heart. The question is whether all this show of authority and the disgrace accompanying it have been necessary. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to go as a peace-maker, to arrange for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah, to see things for himself, to put an end to complications. Has he no qualifications for the job? He is a Kashmiri by descent, President of the States People's Conference, President-elect of the Indian National Congress, a man respected in countries throughout the world. The state authorities did not want gestures of goodwill; after the recent bloodshed, they wanted the world to forget it. But the world will not forget the indecent arrests, the ruthless repression, the mean impostures of autocracy. In the petty imagination of the authorities Kashmir must have seemed a mighty state besides Faridkot and they decided that Faridkot should not be repeated. But they forget that Faridkot and Kashmir are all but flimsy structures if the people's rights are violated and if the people's wrath is roused.

The responsibility for this obtuseness must primarily rest on the shoulders of the Maharaja, an autocrat in theory and an autocrat by profession and practice. Not in the limelight for the last few years, Sir Hari Singh is now figuring in a political 'cause celebre', as he figured as Mr. A in a legal 'cause celebre' years ago in France. In this conflict, which has raised more dust than necessary, along with the Dogra ruler stand the Kashmiri Pandit, Kak, and the Kashmiri Muslim, Sheikh Abdullah. Mr. Kak is, indeed, a strange personality, a typical careerist-courtier, whom his admirers and those who have been bought over by him and may one day hope to be state guests, describe admiringly as a Cardinal Richelieu and Durbar Virawalla rolled into one. This state politician, to whom statesmanship must be an alien virtue, has described Nehru as a partisan. Whose partisan? The partisan of the

people's cause is always a partisan to whom honour will redound and partisan in the cause of liberty have everywhere triumphed. But Sheikh Abdullah is today an eyesore to the state authorities, a man enjoying the confidence of politically-conscious Hindus and Muslims in the state and who has been a leading light of the states people's struggle is being treated as an ordinary mischief-monger. He was arrested unceremoniously, as if he were a felon, and he has been subjected to calumny since his arrest, as if he had no right of reply. Behind all this also must be the Political Department, living in a Sleepy Hollow of its own but a pillar of princely autocracy.

Since communal colour has been given to the whole affair even by supposedly nationalist papers of British India, which, we are reliably told, are vetting correspondents' messages to deepen the communal colour and discredit Sheikh Abdullah, we must cry a halt to it. No greater ill service can be done to India or to the cause of freedom. Mr. Savarkar may have congratulated the state Government for quelling the movement successfully but if the Hindu Mahasabha can take advantage of the fact that the ruler is a Hindu and the people's leader a Muslim, it means it has reached a climax of its meanness and its mischievous character. But there is no reason why others should lose their heads or forget that the population of Kashmir is after all predominantly Muslim. Individuals may be wrong but a whole movement cannot be wrong and impartial correspondents are agreed that there was nothing communal about the movement in Kashmir. It has been also made clear by responsible leaders of the States People that the demand for the removal of the Dogra ruler was not a right move. But it must be said in fairness to Sheikh Abdullah that, in his memorandum to the Cabinet Mission, his objections to the Treaty of Srinagar and demand for scrapping it do not occupy much space. His whole objection was to autocracy either to Dogras or of pandits. 'Quit Kashmir' was an unhappy copy of 'Quit India' but its scope and intention must have been clear to the meanest intelligence. At least, the States People's

Conference, embracing all the States and, therefore, capable of detachment, cannot be accused of extremism or hasty conclusions. At the recent session of the general council of the conference, a resolution was passed appealing to the Kashmir people to control themselves and authorizing the president to take such steps as he might consider necessary. Was this a gesture of ill-will? Should the rulers and the Prime Minister be so impervious to reason? Is the answer to this the raising of Red bogeys, of visions of an Indian Azerbaijan? We are not frightened by the prospect of Stalin taking the place of Kak. Why are these silly stories put out when the issue between the ruler and the people is straight and clear?

Events are moving forward and nothing can stop them. Authority in Kashmir looks tragically futile and stupid now. If the States People's Conference's moderation in not demanding the abolition of the princely system is responsible for this reckless exercise of treaty rights, then the time may come when the princes will so discredit themselves that even British troops cannot save them. The Dogra house will submit with grace or go into the oblivion from which it sprang at an unfortunate period in our history. The whole people are bleeding with bayonet wounds that were wantonly inflicted at the Kohala border. We do not know what more may happen. The Crown Representative and the Cabinet mission must ponder deeply over this issue which has suddenly flared up. To the state authorities we say, sound the retreat, act with grace, act with sense or be doomed to ignominy and to inglorious extinction."

The "Hindusthan Times" on June 22, 1946 said:

"We cannot condemn too strongly the action of the Kashmir authorities in banning the entry of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru into the State and employing armed sentries for the purpose. The fact that his arrest took place several hours after he had camped at Domel shows that even further reflection did not bring sense to those responsible for the original order. Apparently the power-intoxicated

Prime Minister, the frightened Maharaja and the intriguing Political Residency had decided on a trial of strength despite the fact that Pandit Nehru's mission was one of peace. They have only dissipated the goodwill they had built up for their cause. Although the three authorities acted from different motives, they have created an ugly situation which is likely to fray the already frayed tempers in Delhi. Already the Congress Working Committee has decided to adjourn indefinitely. Even if a ban was to be imposed some Minister should have personally handled the situation. To have employed armed sentries was rightly provocative. We hope the Maharaja will remedy the situation which, unless immediately retrieved, is likely to recoil badly on its creators."

The "National Call" on June 24, 1946 said:

"The decision of the Kashmir State Government to ban the entry into Kashmir of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who left for Srinagar today apart from being unwise is most regrettable. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, before leaving Delhi made it quite clear that he was going to Kashmir for a short visit for two distinct purposes. Firstly he wanted to be there to arrange for the defence of Mr. Abdullah and to be personally present at the opening of the trial on Friday. Secondly he wanted to see things for himself and to form own opinion about the situation in Kashmir. The Kashmir Government have themselves declared repeatedly that they have nothing to hide, and they would welcome the visit of any responsible person desiring to see things for himself and to acquaint himself with the real position. On the basis of information received by him in the early stages of the trouble Pandit Nehru issued a statement making serious allegations. Several of these allegations were contradicted by the State authorities. The fact that Pandit Nehru has not repeated those allegations and challenged the contradictions of the State authorities, only shows that he wanted to take the earliest opportunity of personally acquainting himself with the real facts. What happened in Faridkot clearly shows

that a visit at such a critical time by a responsible person of the eminence of Pandit Nehru can be very helpful if there is willingness on the part of the State authorities to rectify any of the mistakes committed by them. Even if the State authorities do not desire to take advantage of Pandit Nehru's political influence with the National Conference in bringing about a settlement, they should have welcomed his desire to personally acquaint himself with facts. Instead of banning his entry, which is bound to lead to further complications and embarrassments, they should have welcomed the visit and should have taken special pains to place the real facts before him.

So far as the case of Mr. Abdullah is concerned, Pandit Nehru's desire to arrange for his defence can only serve the ends of justice, and we refuse to believe that the Kashmir State authorities have any desire to impede the impartial course of justice. Pandit Nehru is the President-elect of the Indian National Congress. He is the President of the All-India States People's Conference. He is Minister-designate for the Viceroy's Executive Council. In a few days perhaps he would be taking charge of the portfolio of External Affairs. He is not the type of man who would be expected to go about creating trouble in any state. On the other hand he can be very well expected, after he has been convinced of the correctness of the cause to employ his influence in favour of compromise and better understanding. Knowing as we do, Pandit Nehru, he will most certainly defy the ban imposed by the Kashmir Government and if this defence leads to arrest, the Kashmir Government will have created for themselves a most serious complication. We hope even now they will realise the unwisdom of the step taken by them and they will desist from serving the notice on Pandit Nehru. Statesmanship and wisdom most certainly require that they should welcome his visit and take advantage of his presence to settle the differences that have arisen between State authorities and the National Conference, so that peace and harmony can once again prevail in the State."

"The Amrita Bazar Patrika," Calcutta, on June 23, 1946 said: "Who is this tiny little tyrant who delivers himself of the astounding proposition that Pandit Nehru's entry into Kashmir State must be stopped because he has reasons to believe that the latter is about to act in a manner prejudicial to public safety and order? He is the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, a Rai Bahadur, to boot, and on every showing an arrogant ignoramus. The poor fellow does not know that he is playing with fire. Here is the President-elect of the Indian National Congress determined to assert his right to cross the frontier and go to Kashmir, study the tense situation on the spot and make all possible arrangements for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah who has been placed under arrest and is being prosecuted by the State authorities. It is impossible to argue with a self-deluded imitation potentate who has persuaded himself that a man of the position and eminence of Pandit Nehru and who is the accredited spokesman of India's political aspirations constitutes a menace to public safety and order. If he does, which, of course, every reasonable man must most emphatically repudiate, then the Maharaja of Kashmir and his First Minister must have evolved a new conception of law and unlaw, of public good and social wrong-doing. In any event this proud and ancient country has reached a stage when a feudal autocrat's primitive ideas must be made to yield place to modern trends. But we are not surprised at the panicky measures taken at the instance of Pandit Ramachandra Kak, for that is the name of the Maharaja's Prime Minister. He has been trained in these savage and old-world traditions; he knows no better way. He is paid to support and sustain and bolster up a machinery that is obnoxious to social decencies.

But what about the Crown Representative in relation to the Indian States and his doings in this serio-comic drama that is being enacted in this North-Western Princely paradise? Together with three high-ranking Ministers of the Crown Lord Wavell has been engaged for over three months in exploring, if we have to take their pro-

fessions at their face value, the possibilities of an Indo-British settlement on the basis of a peaceful and orderly transfer of power from the British to Indian hands. The Viceroy has had frequent conversations with Pandit Nehru both in the latter's private capacity and, what is more important, as the Congress's President-designate. Nor is it improper to guess, unless the Viceroy is completely innocent of his appropriate role in the machinery of State, that he knows what is happening in Kashmir. What, we ask, has the Crown Representative been doing all this time? It is reported that he asked Pandit Nehru not to proceed to Kashmir at the present moment. We do not know whether there is any basis for this report. Even if there is, that precisely is not the manner in which the Viceroy could have sought to intervene in this matter. Instead he should have directed the relevant authorities in Kashmir not to kick up a row over Pandit Nehru's visit and thus complicate the situation internally as well as from the wider point of view involved in the task to which the three Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy have addressed themselves. As matters stand, the entire outlook is gloomy and fraught with dangerous possibilities.

There is no stopping Pandit Nehru. If, as is reported, he has been taken to an unknown destination, there are others, thousands and tens of thousands, who at this end are determined to cross the border. The North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab are not going to sit idle. At New Delhi Maulana Azad and his colleagues will not take this challenge lying down and waste their precious time in carrying on negotiations with the Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission in this atmosphere. That is clear and definite and unless Kashmir's Ruler and his Prime Minister are forced to retrace their steps and make amends, there is no end of trouble for that State and the whole of India. Already the whole country is burning with indignation and there is evidence of the explosive character of the

tension. And what are the three Cabinet Ministers doing? Under their very nose a situation is being allowed to develop in which their labours for these months may go in vain. We admit that in strict law the direct and immediate responsibility is one that devolves on the Viceroy, but we refuse to believe that these Ministers are not being taken into consultation in such a grave matter involving as it does, their immediate and long-term plans for India's political reshaping.

Are we then to understand that the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy have made up their minds that they would no longer proceed with their plans or that they would try to put them into operations without and in spite of the Congress? Has the Kashmir "incident" been conceived after the well-known Chinese pattern so that like the land-grabbing Japanese imperialists the British may exploit it for unworthy and ignoble ends which do no credit to their wisdom, statesmanship or sense of realism? It is inconceivable that Gandhiji and Congress Working Committee should, in the present circumstances, take the Cabinet Mission and Lord Wavell at their word. They have by their apparent non-intervention in affairs relating to Kashmir or back-door intervention put themselves out of court in any serious negotiations calculated to bring about an enduring understanding between India and Britain. It may be the three Ministers and the Viceroy are very much concerned over the developments in Kashmir. We do not know. Whether that be so or not, the way the situation is being allowed to drift is bound to lead to consequences which will render continuation of friendly conversations across the table over the proposed interim and long-term arrangements an absurd and ridiculous proceeding. We warn most solemnly the Maharaja of Kashmir and the petty little tyrant in his employ. We address these words of caution to Lord Wavell and the members of the Cabinet Mission. They must bring the Maharaja to his senses or else the dark and sinister cloud, which is no bigger than a man's hand, will soon envelop the entire horizon and sweep the land by a mighty and irresistible upsurge."

The Amrita Bazar Patrika, Allahabad, on June 23, 1946
said :—“It happened many years ago. Old readers of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* will remember how this paper defended Kashmir against the British rulers on the question of Gilgit. We had then the support of the entire body of Indian public opinion. The then ruler was noted for his wisdom. Though the population of the State was largely Muslim he enjoyed the confidence of all sections of his subjects. The ruler of the State long remembered with gratitude the services done to him by British India. There was then no Rai Bahadur Kak to wrongly advise the Maharaja, create a gulf between him and his subjects and into the bargain alienate the sympathy of the people of British India. Rai Bahadur Kak has succeeded in the course of a few months in dissipating the tremendous asset of goodwill that the Maharaja possessed. The Prime Minister when banning the entry of Pandit Nehru into the territory is reported to have said, “Kashmir is not Faridkot.” He was right but in a contrary sense. The Maharaja of Kashmir, misguided as he has been by his Prime Minister, has failed to show the wisdom that the ruler of Faridkot did after no doubt some initial bungling. We all now see the result. Faridkot is quiet. The ruler is happy. So also his subjects. But what do we find in Kashmir to-day ? On the news of Panditji’s arrest Dr. Khan Sahib, Premier of the Frontier Province, has left with two hundred Red Shirt volunteers to enter Kashmir. We can well imagine that the whole State will be aflame. The news of the arrest and the bayonet charge will send a thrill of horror and indignation throughout India. It is a pity that Rai Bahadur Kak and his master have to be told that it is not 18th or even 19th century, that the world has moved faster than the ideas of many ruling Princes and their Ministers. They have deliberately stirred the forces of revolution and will consequently have to reap the consequences.

One is amazed at the blundering tactics of the Kashmir Durbar. To have prosecuted Sheikh Abdulla on a charge of sedition was bad enough. To have suppressed by force the popular demonstrations was worse. To have refused permission to Pandit Nehru particularly when at the instance of Panditji all agitations in the State had been abandoned

was an act of supreme folly. Finally come the bayonet charge and the incredible foolhardiness of his arrest ! The Kashmir Durbar will not take long so realise that it has inflicted on the Ruler and his Government a damage in prestige and power which Sheikh Abdulla could not possibly inflict by the hundred speeches as seditious as the one for which he is being prosecuted. The Ruler's position is intrinsically weak as the vast majority of his subjects are Muslim. Kashmir comes within the range of Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan. Sheikh Abdulla and his National Muslim Conference have prevented the growth of Jinnahism in the State. Had the advisers of the Maharaja been wise they would have enlisted the Sheikh's support, at least not have driven him to the arms of the avowed enemy. If the Maharaja's position was shaky Rai Bahadur Kak has made it shakier still. A parallel to this stupendous folly is difficult to find even in the none too bright history of the ruling princes in India under British paramountcy.

This terrible event, as fate would have it, synchronises with the most eventful chapter in Indo-British relations. The British have always stood between the rulers and their subjects defending the former even in their iniquities against the latter. They have stood between revolution and the perpetuation of the mediaeval system of dynastic government. That protection and paramountcy is going to be withdrawn. The rulers have now to fall back entirely on the goodwill of their subjects. They can survive only as constitutional heads of their States. Fancy, Kashmir perpetrates this outrage at this juncture !

The Rulers have almost always faithfully aped the tactics of the Governments in British India. The British Indian Government launches a policy of repression and that policy is reflected as in a mirror in the Princely States. Curiously enough, when the British Indian Government chooses to be conciliatory the States authorities fail to adjust themselves to that changing mood. As we observed the other day, even after the sun has gone down sand heated by the sun takes a considerable time to resume its normal temperature.

Is Rai Bahadur Kak the proverbial frog in a well ?

Does he not know that important discussions for the transfer of power from British to Indian hands are taking place at Delhi ? Did he know when he issued the warrant for the arrest of Panditji that the Viceroy had invited him to join his Cabinet ? The Kashmir Government could choose no more inopportune moment than the present for the action it has taken. That action will have repercussions deeper and far wider than have perhaps been imagined by Kashmir's Prime Minister.

His Majesty's Cabinet Ministers are here and they cannot but realise how mistaken they were in leaving the rulers to their good sense in adjusting themselves to the changed conditions following upon the withdrawal of paramountcy. That part of the plan relating to the Indian Princes could not be left vague as it has been. Some definite scheme has got to be formulated if the Rulers are to be saved from the inelasticity of the minds of their advisers. They will visualise that by refusing to the subjects of the State direct representation to the Constituent Assembly they are only encouraging the forces of revolution and making constitutional progress in the States impossible. The ruler of Kashmir has just given a demonstration of folly the consequences of which will be incalculable.

Nobody will be impressed by the attempt at counter-demonstration by three hundred Hindu and Muslim volunteers who came to ask Pandit Nehru to go back. We have such stooges in British India also. As it happened this contemptible show was simply swept away by the surging welcome Panditji received from tens of thousands who carried him and his companions in an irresistible march fifty miles inside Kashmir territory. Stooges have not saved the mighty British empire in India. They will not save the crowned pygmies who would have ceased to exist long ago but for British protection.”

“*The Leader* ” on June 22, 1946 said :—“ From Kashmir comes the news that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dewan Chamanlal received bayonet injuries when they defied the ban on their entry into the State. Pandit Nehru was going to Kashmir in order to arrange for the defence of Sheikh

Abdullah. If the Maharaja of Kashmir and his advisers had some sort of a case against Sheikh Abdullah, they were spoiling it by the action which they took against Pandit Jawaharlal—an action which is bound to create the worst possible prejudice against them throughout the country. If the ban on Pandit Jawaharlal entering Kashmir was a mistake, the attempt to stop him by force was a criminal blunder. And now they have arrested him. Even the Maharaja of Kashmir cannot be unaware of the position which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru occupies in the public life of this country and the affections of his countrymen. The people of this country will rather sacrifice a thousand Mahrajahs of Kashmir than a single Nehru. The bayonet wound inflicted on Pandit Jawaharlal is a wound inflicted on Mother India herself and the Maharaja of Kashmir will not be easily forgiven for this crime."

"*The Indian Express*," Madras, on June 21, 1946 said :— "Kashmir has earned needless notoriety by the treatment meted to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on Wednesday. It is true that the Pandit proceeded to Srinagar in defiance of the hostile attitude taken up by the Government, but then no self-respecting man, let alone an impetuous leader of Pandit Jawaharlal's standing, could be expected to deviate from the path of duty because of the affront offered. If anything, the desire to know the truth about the situation that has developed in Kashmir would have only been whetted by the mantle of secrecy worn by it. After all, the object of the Congress President-elect's visit was to study the situation at first hand and to arrange for the defence of the principal Kashmir leader in the prosecution launched by the administration. If Premier Kak has a clean conscience and a good cause to present, he should have welcomed Pandit Nehru's visit and utilised the opportunity to prove to his satisfaction that all his alleged prejudices against the administration—which, by the way, were the main ground for refusal of permission to the Pandit—were groundless. Besides, ordinary courtesy demanded that the Durbar should have provided all the facilities to the distinguished visitor in the discharge of his duties as the President of the All-India States People's Conference. Instead, his entry into

the State was barred by armed sentries who actually engaged him in a melee and caused him physical injury.

An incident which would have passed off quietly after certain formalities had been gone through has been thus rendered serious by the vulgar exhibition of force by the Kashmir authorities. They have thereby not only spoilt their own case for impartial consideration but have, we are afraid, further complicated a situation which requires delicate handling. Public attention is focussed on States in India, and those which prefer to continue as little islands of reaction and autocracy, will be allowed no quarter. It is difficult to foresee the evil consequence of Kashmir's misguided action, but it is quite on the cards that the Congress will not allow the agitation in the State and the incident reported to pass unnoticed. Congress claims to stand for the whole nation, including the Muslims ; and Kashmir, being predominantly Muslim, can be ignored only at peril. The Government of India in the Political Department, and the Crown Representative, have a direct responsibility in the matter ; whatever attitude they take must be consistent with their obligation to guarantee good government in States."

"*The Hindusthan Times*" on June 23, 1946 said :—It is scandalous that the Kashmir State authorities (and the Political Department without whose approval no major decision can ever take in any State) should have behaved so irresponsibly in banning Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's entry into the State. Such tactics far from achieving peace, which can be the only rational aim of the State Administration, can only discredit the present regime. Pandit Nehru is visiting the State not on an agitational mission but as a peace-maker. He has condemned the current repression but has also dissociated himself (and the States People's Conference of which he is the President) from the 'Quit Kashmir' movement. Apart from peace-making, the only other object of his mission is to arrange for the legal defence of Sheikh Abdullah. It was in the Administration's own interest to welcome him, for this was their only chance of a quick, peaceful settlement. The military and police measures might have succeeded for the time being in sup-

pressing the revolt, but they can never abolish the conditions which gave rise to it. The present abnormal situation cannot last for long. Sooner or later, the Kashmir Government have got to come to terms with the representatives of the people. The sooner they do it the better. For the leadership of the Kashmir State's people is still in the hands of people who are ready (at least can be persuaded) to align themselves with the rest of the Indian people. Prolonged repression can only breed rank communal reaction.

We hope the Kashmir Government will realize the danger of pitting themselves against Pandit Nehru and the people. Not only must they accept the fact of Pandit Nehru's visit as inevitable in the circumstances, they must regard it as a god-send to extricate them out of a difficult position. The States People's Conference under Pandit Nehru's leadership has remained committed to a moderate policy despite grave provocation on the part of the State authorities. The Kashmir Government must answer this moderation with moderation. They must not prolong their quarrel with the people's leaders but show a willingness to accept a compromise on a democratic basis. They must utilize the services of Pandit Nehru and restore normal conditions. A prolongation of the present state of affairs by further embittering the relations between the people and the Administration can only do irreparable damage to the State's interests.

"*The Pioneer*," Lucknow, on June 21, 1946 said :— "The clash between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Kashmir Durbar is distressing. Idol of millions, the Pandit occupies a place next to that of Mahatma Gandhi in the hearts of his countrymen. A bayonet wound on Nehru, even if it is nothing more serious than a graze and caused involuntarily in a scuffle, is bound to cause widespread indignation. The news of his subsequent arrest will set the country agog with excitement. The whole unfortunate episode which may rock the Durbar to its very foundations could have been avoided, if the parties had only exercised a little more restraint. A front-rank leader like Pandit Nehru should not have behaved with the impetuosity of an adolescent. He lent too ready an ear to the atrocity stories circulated against

the Durbar by interested parties. The unfounded allegations about the desecration of the Jumma Masjid at Srinagar and the burning with petrol and kerosene of the bodies of victims of police firing were deliberately broadcast to discredit the Dogra rule and to intensify the mischievous "Quit Kashmir" movement. The Pandit's sweeping condemnation of the State administration on the basis of these unfounded stories was as unfortunate as it was uncalled for. In fairness to him it must be admitted that he made a frank confession about his mistakes when the facts were brought to his notice. Huffed at Pandit Nehru's unjustified attack on the administration the Kashmir Durbar, on its part, committed a bigger mistake by placing a ban on the Pandit's entry into the State. To Jawaharlal, a challenge means invitation and as Nature has not fashioned him for the role of a non-violent *satyagrahi* he straightaway proceeded to his destination, pushing aside literally all opposition on the way. If a lesser celebrity were involved in the tussle the whole episode would have smacked of a crude melodrama, not to be taken seriously. With Pandit Nehru as the central figure the incident and the subsequent developments seem to follow the pattern of a Greek tragedy. The situation should not be allowed to deteriorate further. The Princely Order, perturbed at the happenings, is reported to have contacted Kashmir Durbar with a view to preventing any precipitate action against Nehru. This is no time to make a fetish of prestige. The Kashmir Durbar would be well-advised to release Nehru forthwith, withdraw the ban and enlist his co-operation in holding an exhaustive and independent inquiry into the recent disturbances in the State. Pandit Nehru, on his part, should realise that the problems of Kashmir can best be approached and studied with an open mind and not with the bias of a partisan whose ear has been poisoned by the insidious propaganda of power-grabbing agitators anxious, in their own selfish interests, to rid the State of Dogra rule."

CHAPTER X

NEHRU - AZAD - KASHMIR RULER CORRESPONDENCE

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's telegram to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on June 21st, 1946 when he was in Uri Dak Bungalow.

"The Working Committee and I advise you to return to Delhi as promised tomorrow. The Working Committee's final decision awaiting your return. I have asked His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir to adjourn Sheikh Abdullah's case."

Maulana Azad's telegram to Kashmir ruler on June 21, 1946.

"May I request you to order postponement of Abdullah's trial to facilitate Nehru's early return to Delhi, where important decisions are pending."

The reply of the Maharaja of Kashmir to Maulana Azad.

"There is nothing to prevent Nehru from returning whenever he wishes to return. There was never any intention of retaining him here, if he wanted to return. As far as the issue of orders for postponement of the case as suggested by you is concerned, such course is impossible, as the case is in hands of the independent judiciary. I assure you my Government will not oppose grant by court of any reasonable postponement requested by defence. Your telegram to Nehru has been wirelessly to him. Original forwarded by special messenger. All facilities will be provided to enable him to return to Rawalpindi, the moment he decides to do so. In fact one of my cars is at his disposal."

The following telegrams were exchanged between Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad :

From Pandit Nehru to Maulana Azad dated Uri, June 21.

"Your message was conveyed to me. Also the news of the postponement of Sheikh Abdullah's trial to July 1. In view of the grave courtesy offered to me by the Kashmir Government in spite of my friendly approaches, I deeply regret I am wholly unable to return until full liberty of movement, including a visit to Srinagar, is accorded to me.—Jawaharlal Nehru."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has sent the following reply to Pandit Nehru :

"Your wire. I and all are of opinion that your presence here is essential above everything else. Remember that you are under an organization which you have adorned so long. Its needs must be paramount for you and me. Remember also that your honour is ours and your obedience to the Congress call automatically transfers to it the duty of guarding your honour. The Committee is also solicitous equally with you about Sheikh Abdullah's case and the welfare of Kashmir people. Therefore, I expect you to return in answer to this. You will tell Maharaja Sahib that as soon as you are freed by the Congress you will return to Kashmir to retrieve your honour and fulfil your mission. I am releasing this to the Press.—Abul Kalam Azad."

From Pandit Nehru to Maulana Azad :

"Received your message at 1 p.m. after lunch. In obedience to direction of the Working Committee I am prepared to return immediately on the understanding that I will come back to Kashmir later. Early return is only possible by aeroplane from Srinagar. No service plane is available either at Srinagar or Rawalpindi. I am under detention and can make no arrangement myself."

Pandit Nehru's telegram to Governor of Kashmir :

Dak Bungalow,
Domel, KASHMIR.

20 June 1946.
10-45 a.m.

PANDIT MAHARAJ KISHAN DAR,

District Magistrate & Governor of Kashmir,
Camp : Domel, KASHMIR.

Dear Mr. Dar,

As you are aware our party was proceeding to Srinagar in connection with the trial of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah which is fixed for tomorrow morning there. Mr. Asaf Ali and Diwan Chamanlal were to appear as counsel for the defence. Several days ago an application was presented to the Chief Justice of Kashmir for permission for them to appear in this case. I was proceeding to Srinagar with a view to advising my colleagues in regard to the conduct of the case.

Yesterday afternoon at Kohala you served an order on me under the Defence of Kashmir Rules, which I considered wholly unjustifiable, asking me to leave Kashmir territory immediately and not to return to it without written permission. I told you then that I was unable to carry out these directions. I had come to help in the defence of Sheikh Abdullah's case and I did not propose to go back without going to Srinagar for this purpose. It was open to you forcibly to prevent me from proceeding further or to take me out of Kashmir State territory. As a matter of fact my remaining in that territory was in itself a disobedience of the order served upon me.

I had no desire to put additional difficulties in your way and hence I waited at Kohala for five hours in order to give you time to communicate with your superior authorities. As, however, no special directions came for you or were communicated to us, I started walking in the direction of Domel accompanied by my colleagues. An attempt was made to stop us, but gradually we advanced about two or three hundred yards. We then had another talk with you

and put it to you that you should either arrest us or allow us to proceed. You were prepared to do neither. You did arrest, however, my colleague Pandit Dwarkanath Kachru, though it was not clear to me how his case differed from that of the others. In regard to all the others, excepting myself, you said that they were free to go ahead.

Somewhat later we gathered that you had gone to Domel and the police and military, who were barring our way, had been removed. It was late at night then and we also proceeded to the Domel Dak Bungalow where we spent the night.

I should like to know what the position is in regard to me and my colleagues. . Mr. Asaf Ali and Diwan Chamanlal propose to go to Srinagar to confer in Sheikh Abdullah's case with other lawyers and with Sheikh Sahab himself. As the case is fixed for tomorrow it is necessary for this conference to take place today at the latest. They have been told, however, by you that they cannot go to Srinigar or indeed leave Domel. They have further been told by you that they as well as all the other members of the party may consider themselves technically under arrest. Thus, I presume, I am also under arrest.

I should like to be perfectly clear about this matter. Am I at the present moment under arrest? Are Mr. Asaf Ali and Diwan Chamanlal under arrest, and are the other members of the party also under arrest? Obviously we have to consider our own course of action and before we do so we should be told definitely how matters stand. I should like an answer in writing so that there might be no misapprehension.

In particular I should like you to appreciate that Messrs. Asaf Ali and Diwan Chamanlal are to appear as counsel in Sheikh Abdullah's case and preventing them from proceeding to Srinagar today will be interfering with the arrangements for the defence.

I am for the moment staying on here in Domel Dak Bungalow awaiting your reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Sd./ JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Reply of the Governor of Kashmir :

Domel Dak Bungalow,

20-6-46

Dear Mr. Nehru,

Please refer to your letter of date.

I note that your intention in proceeding to Srinagar was to advise Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah's counsel regarding his defence—but the order served on you yesterday had for its basis the conditions prevailing in Srinagar.

It was at Mr. Asaf Ali's request that I allowed you to proceed to the Domel Dak Bungalow for your convenience.

There was, as you say, no objection on my part to let any member of your party to proceed to Srinagar except yourself. Some actually proceeded. Later in the evening at Diwan Chamanlal's request I issued a permit for night travel for four of your cars to carry the remaining counsel. This was also not availed of.

It was only in view of what actually happened at Kohala that your party had not been allowed to proceed any further. Your party in the Dak Bungalow is for the time being one of detenus.

I am taking immediate steps to pass on the contents of your letter to the authorities with my remarks for suitable action.

Yours sincerely,

Sd./ M. K. DAR,

District Magistrate, Kashmir

To

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Dak Bungalow,
Domel.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to the Maharaja of Kashmir prior to his departure for New Delhi.

Dak Bungalow,
Uri, Kashmir.

22 June, 1946.

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

My last letter to you, which was taken personally by Shri Dwarkanath Kachru, was followed by various activities on the part of the Kashmir Government resulting in my arrest and detention as well as the arrest and detention of a number of my colleagues. In these circumstances perhaps another letter from me would hardly be called for. But I feel that I owe it to you and to myself to send you this letter.

In my telegram and letter to you sent from Delhi I made every effort to approach you in a courteous and friendly manner. I wanted to avoid any undesirable development and to help in solving, or at any rate easing, a situation which could not be welcomed by any one concerned with the welfare of Kashmir. I regret that you did not appreciate my approach to this question and instead permitted your Government to take the action it did. I consider this action not only a grave courtesy personally, which would not matter very much, but to the organisations I have the honour to represent. I am not agreeable at any time or at any place to my freedom of movement being interfered with, whether it is an Indian State or the rest of India. Inevitably I could not agree to obey the order served on me at Kohala. I am convinced that it was a major error on the part of your Government to arrest Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah as he was going to Delhi to meet me. It was the second major error on the part of your Government to stop me from going to Srinagar in connection with Sheikh Abdullah's case. The consequences of these actions are patent, and I can hardly conceive that the Kashmir Government is pleased with its own activities or with the consequences these activities have led to.

In view of the directions of the Congress Working Committee conveyed to me by the Congress President,

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, I have decided to return immediately to Delhi provided facilities are available for the purpose. I have done so, however, on the distinct understanding that I shall return to Kashmir as soon as the urgent work in Delhi permits me to do so. The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's case has been adjourned has facilitated my present return. As soon as the date of my return to Kashmir is fixed up I shall inform you of it. I do not know how your Government will view my return and whether it will again attempt to stop it or not. If any such order is passed with a view to stopping me, I shall be unable to obey it. I see no justification whatever for any Government, least of all the Kashmir Government at present, to try to stop the entry of an individual like me, and I cannot submit to any such restriction on my freedom of movement. I trust, however, that no such question will arise again and that no obstruction will be placed in my way in carrying out my programme.

One of my colleagues, Shri Dwarkanath Kachru, was arrested at Kohala apparently for doing just what most of us did on the occasion. The reason for differentiating his case from others is not clear to me.

Your sincerely,

Sd./ Jawaharlal Nehru

His Highness

The Maharaja of Kashmir,

Srinagar, Kashmir.

CHAPTER XI

PANDIT NEHRU'S ACCOUNT

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his first meeting with Pressmen at New Delhi after his return from Kashmir, on June 23, 1946 said :— “ I do not consider myself an outsider in any State. The whole of India is my home and I claim the right to go to any part. I am not sorry for what has happened if it makes rulers and others think hard of the new condition of India and the temper of her people.

“ Highnesses and Excellencies do not count in people's eyes in the India of today,” Pandit Nehru added. “ Treaty rights, which are as dead as a doornail, or dynastic rights, which have no value in people's eyes, do not count. It is only human rights that count. It is by that standard alone that all problems have to be considered and judged.”

Giving an account of the recent happenings in Kashmir, Pandit Nehru said : “ For the last four days I have been rather cut off from outside newspapers and news. I find now that, as is usual, rather exaggerated accounts of various occurrences have appeared in the Press. So I shall give a brief account of the facts as I know them.

“ Our party reached Kohala on the afternoon of June 19 and after lunch at the Dak Bungalow we crossed the bridge into Kashmir territory at 2-15. I was served with an order under the Defence of Kashmir Rules asking me to leave Kashmir. I said that I was unable to obey that order. I saw no justification for it and I proposed to remain there. The road further ahead was blocked by a wooden barrier and by the police and the military. Our party sat on the roadside near a small customs hut for a long time. The district magistrate had told us that he would communicate with the higher authorities and asked us to wait for an answer. We agreed to do so. We grew rather impatient as hour after

hour went by and no answer came. Ultimately at about 7-45 p.m. I told the district magistrate that I could not remain on the wayside any longer and that I proposed to march on foot on the road to Srinagar. Obviously, I could not go very far on foot and Srinagar was 132 miles further on.

"While we were waiting some residents of Kohala, chiefly young men and schoolboys gathered at the spot. They sang national songs and raised our usual slogans. On the police side three lorries had brought a number of people from Srinagar to the neighbourhood with black flag. They were shouting out 'Jawaharlal, go back.' They were, however, quite disciplined about it and when a police officer raised his hands they stopped shouting immediately. Much later in the evening some of these black-flag demonstrators came to me to apologize privately and to say that they had been paid for the occasion.

"When news of my being stopped reached Murree, about 20 Congressmen from there came over in a bus to Kohala. References in the papers to *jathas* gathering there are entirely wrong. Apart from one lorry-load of Congressmen who came to inquire as to what had happened and some of the residents of Kohala who had gathered there no one else came so far as I know Kohala is a very small place with only a few inhabitants.

"At about 7-45, I started marching on the Srinagar road. Others followed me. When we came up to the police and military, I pushed ahead in between them ; so did the others. Some of the military had bayonets, some had rifles, while the police had lathis. The police refrained from using their lathis except in trying to stop us. The bayonets were very near us but actually there was no injury from them. In fact when one bayonet was within a few inches of me Mr. Dwarkanath Kachru, who was standing next to me, diverted it. He was arrested soon after. On the whole, I have no complaint against the police or the military who were placed in a most difficult position. But when there are bayonets and loaded rifles accidents can easily take place. The order to load rifles was given in our presence. I was not injured in any way, nor was anyone else except as a result of pushing about and hustling. Altogether we must

have gone about 250 yards, the latter part of the journey being more or less of a procession with the police and military joining in.

"We then stopped again and had a talk with the district magistrate. It was rather absurd our walking along in a procession this way. Right at the beginning we asked him if we were arrested. He said: 'No.' If we were not arrested then, we claimed the right to march on. Ultimately, the magistrate took away the police and military to Domel, 25 miles ahead. We had some kind of meal on the middle of the road and motored to Domel, where we spent the night. The next morning we were told that we were technically under arrest. Mr. Asaf Ali and Diwan Chamanlal wanted to go to Srinagar but they were able to do so only when special permission came from Srinagar late in the afternoon.

"Late at night we were removed from there to Uri, 50 miles from Srinagar. A military convoy accompanied us and the Uri Dak Bungalow was converted into a kind of prison guarded by the military and there we remained for two days. Then I received Maulana Saheb's telegram demanding my presence here. I had no alternative but to obey. But, of course, it was understood that I would go back to Kashmir later. The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's trial had been postponed also made it easy for me to return. It has been stated that a number of *jathas* came. So far as I know only a few odd people trickled in. As a matter of fact, I had discouraged *jathas* from coming. The whole traffic on the Jhelum Valley road was wholly stopped for two or three days.

"About Kashmir I do not wish to say anything at the present. But these incidents do throw a significant light on conditions in the States. Why I or anyone else be stopped from entering any State I do not know. So far as I am concerned, I have the strongest objection to my being ordered to restrict my movements and I do not propose to obey any orders that I consider unreasonable anywhere and at any place, whether in a State or in the rest of India. Nor do I consider myself an outsider in any State. The whole of India is my home and I claim the right to go to any part of it.

"I am not sorry for what has happened if it makes the rulers and others think hard of the new conditions in India and the temper of her people. Highnesses and Excellencies do not count in people's eyes in the India of today and the worth of a man is not how much he takes but how much he gives to the public in the shape of labour and service.

"So it is not a question of treaty rights which are as dead as a doornail or dynastic rights which have no value in people's eyes but only a question of human rights. It is by that standard alone that all problems have to be considered and tested."

POSTSCRIPT

Mr. Asaf Ali exposes Kak regime in the following statement to the correspondent of "the Bombay Chronicle."

Srinagar, July 4.—Mr. Asaf Ali has sent the following telegram to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Congress and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru : "Case against Sk. Abdulla has been further postponed to July 22. They desire me to stay but it seems too long.

"Premier Kak will contact you but hearing of both sides is essential. Certain forged documents are reliably reported to be the basis of allegations of Communist connection.

"Independent observers hold seriously adverse opinion about the Premier's methods of administration and hold that the ruler has been isolated.

"The majority of prisoners are reported to have been detained in hot places.

"Pending negotiations and hopes of a satisfactory settlement a calm atmosphere has been deliberately maintained, despite deep resentment at proved excesses.

"I am not accepting any onesided story without independent corroboration.

"I am advising maintenance of peacefulness."

A P P E N D I X

Treaty of Amritsar—Treaty between the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh concluded at Amritsar on March 6, 1946.

Treaty between the British Government on the one part, and Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other, concluded on the part of the Birtish Government, by Frederick Currie, Esquire, and Brenet, Major Henery Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of Her Britannic Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, Governor-General appointed by the Honourable Company to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies, and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person.

Article 1. The British Government transfers and makes over, for ever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh, and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its independencies, situated to the eastward of the River Indus, and westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territory ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the Provisions of Article 4 of the Treaty of Lahore dated 9th March, 1846.

Article 2. The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing Article to Maharaja Gulab Singh shall be laid down by the Commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh respectively, for that purpose, and shall be defined in a separate engagement, after survey.

Article 3. In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heir by the provisions of the foregoing Articles, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government, the sum of 75 lacs of rupees (Nanakshahi) fifty lacs to be paid

on ratification of this treaty, and 25 lacs on or before the 1st of October of the current year A.D. 1846.

Article 4. The limits of the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without the concurrence of the British Government.

Article 5. Maharaja Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any dispute or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore, or any other neighbouring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

Article 6. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs, to join, with the whole of his Military force, the British troops, when employed within the hills, or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

Article 7. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take, or retain, in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American State, without the consent of the British Government.

Article 8. Maharaja Gulab Singh, engages to respect in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of Articles 5, 6 and 7 of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar dated 11th March, 1846.

Article 9. The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh, in protecting his territories from external enemies.

Article 10. Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and will in token of such supremacy, present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve goats, (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls.

This treaty consisting of the above Articles has been this day settled by Fredrick Currie, Esqr., and Brenet Major Henery Montgomery Lawrence acting under the directions of the Right Hon'ble Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-

General on the part of the British Government and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person and the said treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General.

Done at Amritsar this 16th day of March in the year of our Lord 1846 corresponding with the 17th day Rabi-ul-awwal 1262 Hijri.

The resolution adopted by the States People's Conference at Ludhiana session held in 1939 on the treaties of Indian princes with the paramount power.

Whereas great stress has been laid on old treaties between the British power and the states and attempts have been made to use these treaties to perpetuate autocracy and the semi-feudal order which so long prevailed in the states and to obstruct the progress of the people, it is necessary to point out the real character of these treaties, the manner and circumstances under which they were made, the person who made them, and the interpretations placed on them in later years. Out of 562 states in India only forty have such treaties, and these were usually made after a conflict between the officers and agents of the East India Company and persons who had no status of independence, but who had come to exercise authority over part of the country, after the collapse of the central authority in India, which resulted from the fall of the Mughal empire. The treaties were made without any reference to or regard for the people and applied to then existing circumstances. Gradually, as these circumstances changed they ceased to have any importance, and many of them were ignored or even completely abrogated long ago by the practice of the Political Department of the Govt. of India, which varied and developed with the changing policy of the Paramount Power. In any event the treaties made over a century ago cannot be considered binding on the people of the states at a time when conditions have entirely changed. The treaties are now used by the Paramount Power to intervene in the struggle for freedom in the states in favour of the Rulers, and the obligation of this power to protect the people from misrule oppression is ignored.

This conference is strongly of opinion that these treaties should be forthwith ended as being completely out of date and inapplicable to present conditions, and it calls upon the Paramount Power to refuse help or protection to those Rulers who decline to put all end to misrule and who attempt to crush the movement for freedom in these states.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks on treaty rights of Princes in his presidential address at Ludhiana session in 1939.

"We are told now of the so-called independence of the states and of their treaties with the Paramount Power which are sacrosanct and inviolable and apparently must go on for ever and ever. We have recently seen what happens to international treaties and the most sacred of covenants when they do not suit the purpose of imperialism. We have seen these treaties torn up, friends and allies basely deserted and betrayed and the pledged word broken by England and France. Democracy and freedom were the sufferers and so it did not matter. But when reaction and autocracy and imperialism stand to lose, it does matter and treaties, however moth-eaten and harmful to the people they might be, have to be preserved. It is a monstrous imposition to be asked to put up with these treaties of a century and a quarter ago, in the making of which the people had no voice or say. It is fantastic to expect the people to keep on their chains of slavery, imposed upon them by force and fraud, and to submit to a system which crushes the life-blood out of them. We recognise no such treaties and we shall in no event accept them. The only final authority and paramount power that we recognise is the will of the people, and the only thing that counts ultimately is the good of the people."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks in his presidential address at the Udaipur Session of the All-India States People's Conference held in December, 1945.

"Frequently we criticise and blame the rulers of these States, and often they are deserving of censure. But it is

well to remember that they are mere shadows cast by the imperial power and the responsibility for the backward condition of the States rests with the Power which has deliberately kept them as they are and prevented their progress. It is well known that Princes with advanced or independent views are not favoured by the Political Department of the Government of India. Many of them are saddled with ministers imposed by the Political Department. In dealing with the States, therefore, we deal with the British Government in another guise. As soon as that Government goes from India, the problem changes completely.

This fact has been stressed recently by a British authority, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency in his book 'The Indian States and Indian Federation' (1942). "The States," he says, "are still so numerous in India that they offer a grave conundrum in evolution to which no solution is at present forthcoming. Their disappearance and absorption would, of course, be inevitable if Britain ever ceased to be the supreme power as regards India." It is interesting to note that the Nizam of Hyderabad, who now claims independence, echoed these sentiments in a semifirman issued by him about a year ago.

De Montmorency says that no solution of the problem is forthcoming, and yet he himself suggests the obvious solution: the elimination of the British power from India. Many of our problems, including the communal problem, would be solved when this happy consummation takes place. Hence the demand: Quit India.

When this is the position it becomes irrelevant and absurd to talk of treaty rights or so-called independence. Indeed no responsible person can take shelter behind these treaties of over a hundred years ago.

It is well to remember also that out of 600 States only about 40 have such treaties. The relations of the other States with the British Paramount Power are regulated by 'engagements,' 'sanads,' 'usage,' 'suffrage,' 'political practices,' and 'conventions.' "

The resolution passed by the Working Committee of the All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on January 17, 1946, at Jammu on the treaty rights claimed by Princes.

The Working Committee of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference have taken into consideration the speech made by the Viceroy of India in the Princes' Chamber on the 17th January, 1946 along with the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber on behalf of the Princes regarding constitutional advancement in the States. After fully examining the salient points in both the speeches, the Working Committee have come to the following conclusions:-

1. That the advice tendered by the Crown Representative to the Princes regarding the steps to be taken in making the administration of these States progressive did not amount to anything progressive. In fact it lost all its significance when he (Viceroy), made such progress conditional on the maintenance of the treaties and the consent of the Princes. These treaties and engagements which are outdated, reactionary and questionable have always stood and will always stand in the way of the States Peoples' progress and to think that the Rulers will give up their privileged positions that they enjoy under them at their sweet will is nothing but wishful thinking. The National Conference has at several occasions made it clear that these treaties have been made in times and under circumstances which do not obtain now and have been framed without seeking the consent of the States People. Under such circumstances no treaties or engagements which act as a dividing wall between their progress and that of their brethren British India, can be binding on the People.

The telegram sent by Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah, President, All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, to the members of the British Cabinet Mission, while they were in Srinagar.

"As President, All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference representing all communities and classes of people inhabiting Jammu and Kashmir State I welcome your visit

to our state and hope that it will usher in new era of freedom both political and economic for four million state people. As Mission is at moment reviewing relationship of Princes with the Paramount Power with reference to treaty rights we wish to submit that for us in Kashmir re-examination of this relationship is vital matter because hundred years ago in 1846 land and people of Kashmir were sold away to servitude of Dogra House by British for seventy-five lakhs of Sikh rupees equivalent to fifty lakhs British Indian rupees. Then Governor of Kashmir resisted transfer, but was finally reduced to subjection with aid of British. Thus sale deed of 1846 misnamed treaty of Amritsar sealed fate of Kashmir masses. We declare to world that this sale deed confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by states governed by treaty rights. As such case of Kashmir stands on unique footing and people of Kashmir press on Mission their unchallengeable claims to freedom on withdrawal of British power from India. We wish to declare that no sale deed however sacrosanct can condemn more than four million men and women to servitude of an autocrat when will to live under this rule is no longer there. People of Kashmir are determined to mould their own destiny and we appeal to Mission to recognise justice and strength of our cause."